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# The Anatomy of Idealism

*Passivity and Activity in Kant,  
Hegel and Marx*

by

**Piotr Hoffmann**



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## INTRODUCTION

In its attempt to come to grips with the nature of the human mind idealism employs such terms as “pure self,” “transcendental apperception,” “pure consciousness” and so on. What do these terms mean? What do they refer to? Provisionally, at least, the following answer could be satisfying: such and similar expressions are purported to capture a very special quality of human mind, a quality due to which man is not simply a part of nature, but a being capable of knowing and acting according to principles governing the spiritual realm.

In the first chapter of the present study the author attempts to bring the idea of “pure Ego” down to earth. By analyzing Kant’s concept of pure apperception — the ancestor of all similar notions in the history of modern and contemporary idealism — the author concludes that certain functions and capacities attributed to pure apperception *by Kant himself* imply the rejection of the idealistic framework and the necessity to “naturalize” the idea of pure self. In other words — and Kant’s claims to the contrary notwithstanding — pure apperception cannot be conceived as superimposed upon man viewed as a part of nature, as a feeling and a sensing being. The referent, as it were, of the expression “pure self” turns out to be something much more familiar to us — a human *organism*, with all its needs, drives and dispositions.

This conclusion is strengthened by the next two chapters. Both of them deal with two different aspects of the passivity vs. activity issue. Let us explain what we mean.

In our own time, more and more philosophers are becoming convinced that any attempt to separate some neutral “data” or “stimuli” and to consider them independently of human interpretations and conceptual frameworks must end in failure. For our theories, our language, our culture seem to shape and to determine what counts as such “data,” so that it becomes impossible to assume that our representations could be matched against some given reality, free of our own constructions and posits.

But if man is thus *active* in shaping — both in theory and in practice — his environment, he also seems to be *passive*, at least to the extent to which his interpretations and theories refer to things outside him. Thus the requirements of human passivity and of human activity come immediately to a clash. For if, after all, our cognitions must be construed as preserving at least some kind of reference to external reality and if, at the same time, what counts as real is already determined and shaped by our conceptual schemes, then how can we

form any notion of such external reality? How can we identify and describe the latter, how can we even know its very existence, if whatever we know reaches us only through the framework of our own concepts and theories?

These and similar difficulties can all be traced back to the problematic of modern idealism. Their solution, I shall be arguing, can only be achieved somewhere along the lines first sketched at the end of Chapter I.

In Chapter II I address myself to the issue of "passivity vs. activity" as it appears in idealism's ways of dealing with the problem of human *knowledge*. I first attempt to follow the inner development of the problem in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. It has been noted many times that, even from a purely scholarly point of view, the *Critique* presents the student with serious difficulties when it comes to the task of interpreting the work as a coherent philosophical whole. Many commentators have laid great emphasis upon the difference between the *Transcendental Aesthetic* and the *Analytic of Principles*. The purpose of my discussion of Kant is to show that these differences are indicative of a basic contradiction in Kant's view of human knowledge and that this contradiction — the *Critique's* inability to reconcile the claims of both the passive and the active elements of human knowledge — stems from the fundamental assumption of idealism: the view of knowledge as a disinterested activity of pure consciousness (and not as man's response to his biological condition).

The *Transcendental Aesthetic* argues for a sharp distinction between concepts and intuitions. It is this distinction, in conjunction with the so-called "metaphysical exposition" of the ideas of space and time, that will lead, in the *Aesthetic*, to the theory of transcendental subjectivity of space and time.

The *Transcendental Deduction* begins to introduce new elements in Kant's thinking. In his attempt to discover the conditions of the possibility of empirical knowledge Kant focuses on the role of the *categories*. No empirical knowledge can be possible, Kant will argue, without the subsumption of intuitions under empirical concepts. But the empirical concepts are combined according to the general rules of understanding — the categories. Hence the categories must be seen as providing the conceptual framework of all empirical knowledge thereby determining the nature of what can be known by us.

As Kant's argument develops it becomes apparent to any reader of the *Critique* that a major problem begins to emerge. Kant's aim is to find a place for both the "conceptual" and the "intuitive" components of knowledge. On the one hand, we are committed by the course of the argument expounded in the *Transcendental Deduction*, to the view that all empirical knowledge must be "processed" and determined by our conceptual framework. We do not have a series of representations which would match a ready-made reality; the only reality of which we can be said to have *knowledge* is already shaped by the rules of understanding. But, on the other hand, the theses of the *Aesthetic* are meant to be incorporated into the argument of the *Deduction*: our conceptual framework determines the "given," the "manifold of intuitions" which *does* impose strict limits and boundary conditions upon the valid employment of

our concepts. It is these two positions — that there must be such a “given” of the sensible manifold *and* that whatever is to be accessible to us in a genuine cognitive act must be articulated and shaped by our theory, by our conceptual framework — which lead at once to the difficulties inherent in Kant’s treatment of knowledge. For if it is the case that intuitions as they appear in human knowledge are already shaped and determined by our conceptual framework, then it becomes increasingly difficult to state just *what* these intuitions are when taken independently of our concepts and theories. The *Transcendental Analytic* can be seen — and has been seen by many a great commentator driven to despair by Kant’s conflicting views — as a radical shift from the positions first introduced in the *Aesthetic*. To a greater and greater degree Kant evolves all features of knowledge from human activity — from the application of our conceptual framework. The passivity is still spoken of, but when it comes down to details it turns out that time, space and the empirical manifold which fills them are now more and more seen as results of conceptual syntheses and constructions.

But, of course, Kant *must* continue to talk about the passive elements of knowledge as well. After all, this is what — in his own eyes — separates him from the rationalism of Leibniz and Wolff. The very fact that knowledge is made up of “synthetic” cognitions requires that there be “more” than just concepts and rules of thinking. And that new element of knowledge is furnished by its intuitive, passive components.

Thus Kant wants us to subscribe to two equally important views: *first*, that human knowledge must be endowed with intuitive, passive elements and, *second*, that whatever is accessible to our cognition must be determined by the activity of understanding.

I shall attempt to show that these two views cannot be reconciled within the framework of the *Critique*. In order to substantiate this claim I shall consider various moves that Kant makes while aiming at such a reconciliation. It will appear, as we go on, that the assertion of the first requirement (human passivity) makes the fulfillment of the second (human activity) altogether impossible; conversely, any attempt to follow consistently Kant’s emphasis on the need for active elements in human knowledge will turn out to be incompatible with Kant’s own views on human passivity.

My interest in Hegel will follow the same line. Hegel, of course — ever since his early essay *Faith and Knowledge* — set out to “overcome” the Kantian dualism of passivity and activity, intuition and understanding. However, I shall attempt to show that he didn’t succeed in that task.

In Hegel, the problem can be traced back to the *Phenomenology of Mind* and it is only exacerbated by the confrontation of the *Phenomenology* with Hegel’s later works such as the *Science of Logic* or the *Encyclopedia*. In the *Phenomenology* — just as in the *Critique of Pure Reason* — the tension between passivity and activity appears from both the logical and the chronological perspective. It is in the first section, on Sense-Certainty, that



Hegel talks about the passive elements of human knowledge. Sense-Certainty is a mode of cognition where concepts and descriptions play no role; it is an act of pure intuition of a sensible particular. Needless to say, Hegel discusses Sense-Certainty only to explode its myths. He attempts to show that human *knowledge* cannot dispense with concepts and general rules. And as this line of argument begins to develop, as we begin to explore, in more and more detail, the conditions of the possibility of human knowledge, it turns out to be the case that the adequate knowledge of reality, both natural and social, cannot be achieved unless nature and society are understood through that universal conceptual scheme which Hegel will work out systematically in the *Science of Logic*.

Here, again, the student is confronted with the same problem as in Kant. In *Absolute Knowledge*, Hegel shall argue, the human knower can grasp reality *via* the universal conceptual scheme. What counts as an object of true and genuine knowledge is determined by that scheme, and this is why reality mirrors the order of logical categories. And yet, on the other hand, that reality is and must remain *distinct* from the conceptual scheme. Thought cannot be locked in its own realm, it must relate to its "other."

Once again, my purpose will be to show that Hegel cannot have it both ways. When Hegel says that the true (the "absolute") knowledge of reality requires the view of the latter as a product of thought, of our conceptual scheme, he does not leave any room — and this, in spite of his clearly stated intentions — for the passive elements of knowledge. Conversely — the assertion of human passivity is incompatible with Hegel's own view of absolute knowledge as based on the application of the conceptual scheme.

In its formal "architectonic" Chapter III is very similar to Chapter II. The chapter begins by focusing on the issue of passivity vs. activity as it appears in Kant's *practical* philosophy. According to Kant, man is "active" to the extent to which he can conduct himself as a truly rational and free agent. The "passivity" of human actions stems from our dependence upon needs and inclinations. The subsumption of intuitions under concepts has its equivalent in the domain of man's moral experience. Insofar as human agents are capable of following moral principles, they can bring their needs and inclinations under the rules of (practical) reason. In doing so, man will show his capacity to respond to moral *ideals* instead of simply pursuing his private *interests*.

In my analysis of Kant I shall be trying to show in detail how the very assumptions of Kant's idealism frustrate his attempt to reconcile the claims of passivity and activity within the area of practical philosophy. It will appear that the conception of man as a free agent and evaluator will leave no room for the conception of man as acting under the influence of needs and inclinations as well. Conversely, when one takes seriously the conception of man as a being of need — always in the grip of the causal mechanisms of nature — one cannot reconcile it with Kant's attempt to construe man as also capable of moral commitments and actions.

Some elements of that basic difficulty of Kant's moral philosophy have been pointed out by Hegel. While I agree with Hegel's criticism of Kant, I am not convinced that Hegel's own attempts to work out a coherent conception of man as responding to both interests and ideals fare much better. To be sure, here as elsewhere, Hegel's fundamental objective was indeed the one of overcoming Kantian dualisms. And yet — if the arguments which I try to develop in Chapter III are correct — Hegel does not really succeed in breaking out of Kant's idealistic framework. He thereby inherits all the difficulties of Kant's practical philosophy. The common assumption, shared by Kant and Hegel, which is at the root of their failure to develop a consistent account of man as both a natural being and a genuine moral actor is, I shall be arguing, the view of human evaluation as a disinterested activity of pure consciousness.

In order to avoid the difficulties generated by the idealistic interpretations of knowledge and evaluation we must take a decisive step towards some form of naturalism. I attempt to show this in more detail in Chapter IV. The philosophical anthropology of Marx discussed in that chapter is offered as an example of the sort of naturalistic theory which I think can provide us with some answers to the problems left unresolved by idealism. I would like to emphasize that Marx is here only an example. I believe it could be shown that theoretical approaches embedded in the writings of American pragmatists or — to take an other example — in the research of certain contemporary ethologists could prove to be just as fruitful in this regard. Nevertheless, the choice of Marx seems justified as his entire intellectual development is firmly rooted in the tradition of German Idealism.

Chapter IV is composed of two sections. In the first section I analyze the issue of "passivity vs. activity" as it pertains to the problem of human *knowledge*. In Marx, human knowledge is seen as part and parcel of man's effort to deal with his *needs* by creating the conditions of his existence. Thinking and conceiving are not construed as disinterested activities of pure consciousness, but as responses to the task of coping with man's predicament in nature. And to that extent man, even while relating to reality through the medium of his conceptual frameworks and theories, is still acting as a natural being for whom nature is — as Marx would put it — his own "inorganic body." Thus at the same time that man is shaping and determining nature by his conceptual frameworks he also appears as a passive being, a "receptive" subject who has a felt experience of reality as fully independent of his own cognitions. What I shall attempt to demonstrate is that the requirements of activity cease to be incompatible with those of passivity once we abandon the vocabulary of pure consciousness for the sake of Marx's theory of human *praxis*. In this connection, an analysis of *labor* as a factor mediating between passivity and activity will be of crucial importance.

I go on to show, in the second section of Chapter IV, that Marx's philosophical anthropology clears the way for a theory capable of reconciling the claims of human responsiveness to ideals with the facts of human embodi-

ment and man's dependence upon need. Here too Marx's approach offers significant advantages when compared with those of Kant and Hegel. In Marx human ideals are not superimposed upon man as a natural being by the activity of pure consciousness. They stem from the very core of human *life*-activity — from man's attempt to deal with his natural impulses and needs. Without adopting some version of such approach the difficulties and the contradictions inherent in idealism cannot be removed.

\*       \*       \*

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## CHAPTER I

## NATURALIZING APPERCEPTION

One of the most important claims that Kant advances in the *Transcendental Deduction* is his insistence that the unity of consciousness, even though it presupposes a “synthesis”, is really of an “analytic” nature.<sup>1</sup> Taken at a somewhat provisional level the “principle of the analytic unity of consciousness” states nothing more than the fact that all of my representations are indeed *mine*, that they belong to me and are *recognized* as belonging to me. Kant will return to this theme time and again in the *Critique*, especially in the *Paralogisms*.

The notion of “synthesis” could not be fully explained without a great deal of analytic work, but it is possible to spell out that aspect of Kant’s theory which will be needed for our further considerations. In section 15 of the second version of the *Transcendental Deduction* Kant asserts that any “combination” (synthesis) is the work of understanding which is described elsewhere as being, among other things, “the faculty of concepts.”<sup>2</sup> Thus as synthesis rests on application of concepts to sensory manifold and as concepts — be they empirical or pure — stem from understanding, synthesis has to be attributed to the exercise of understanding (*Verstand*). The claim does have a certain plausibility at its face value. Even if we agree with Kant’s critics that no argument has as yet been produced for his assertion that no combination can be found in sensibility alone, it is certainly reasonable to assume that a combination based on *concepts* cannot be supplied by our eyes and ears, but is normally attributed to our thinking. Now a concept is, for Kant, the sort of item the function of which is indicated by its very meaning. To have a “*Begriff*” of something implies our ability to gain a grip upon that thing, to grasp it firmly, to be in a position to handle it mentally. When Kant makes this etymological point in his analysis of the synthesis of recognition<sup>3</sup> he is talking about the conditions of the *unity* of our mental processes. And he is suggesting that in order for our mental processes — counting, in Kant’s example — to *have* such unity we must have a firm notion of what it is that we are engaged in; we must have a “conception” of what a given mental activity is all about, of what it aims at, etc. A concept is thus something that organizes a mental activity; when, in counting, we hold fast to the idea of “number,” the different stages of that process are seen as guided by one constant purpose which we have in mind while adding up the units. For this reason alone we do not recount the units we have already counted, we don’t skip some of them, etc. We can express the same

point somewhat differently, although in full agreement with *Kant's own* use of words.<sup>4</sup> To say that we have a "conception" which structures our experiences, is to say that those experiences "make sense" to us, that they are endowed with a *meaning*. As Kemp Smith puts it succinctly, for Kant ". . . *consciousness is in all cases awareness of meaning*."<sup>5</sup> To be sure, Kant distinguishes clearly<sup>6</sup> between subjective and objective meaning — a distinction which parallels the distinction between subjective and objective unity of apperception. But this does not invalidate the general point that any form of human consciousness involves *some interpretation* (be it objectively valid or purely individual) of the data by means of a concept, a *Begriff*. As faculty of framing such conceptions thereby generating meaning for objects understanding is the power that "understands": ". . . it is because it contains these concepts that it is called pure understanding; for by them alone can it *understand* anything in the manifold of intuition . . ."<sup>7</sup>

Since intuitions are unified by concepts and since concepts rest on "functions," i.e., they are produced by the activity of thinking,<sup>8</sup> Kant maintains that human mind can only discover its identity in a plurality of representations if it has "before its eyes the identity of its act."<sup>9</sup> Let us develop this point a bit. In order to consider its representations as belonging to it, as being its own, a human self must construct a unified experience. Now no unified experience can be achieved unless the knower has a firm "conception" of what it is that that experience is all about. And since such a conception, such a "*Begriff*," is *produced* by the activity of human thought, it follows that when holding onto his conception while interpreting the data the subject is attending to an item emerging from his own act. Let us take an example. As I move around that group of bricks in front of me I must hold fast to the thought that all my representations embody the conception of a house. But the presence of such conception in intuitions is not a given; it is a result of understanding's own activity. Hence in holding fast to the "*Begriff*" which unifies my experiences I have "before my eyes" something which emerges from *my own* activity of attributing meaning to intuitions. Thus human understanding not only produces concepts but, by means of them, it also produces unity in its intuitions. Now all acts of understanding may be reduced to judgments<sup>10</sup> and thus understanding can use concepts only in possible judgments.<sup>11</sup> Judgments are mind's ways of introducing order and unity into representations. It follows, that the original function of concepts is to serve as tools of such ordering and unification of our experience.<sup>12</sup>

As we have said at the outset, it is Kant's view that the analytic unity of consciousness requires a prior synthesis of representations. What Kant seems to be saying, then, is something of the following sort. The reason why consciousness and its data are organized in the form of an "I" is to be found in the activity of synthesis. For a subject can ascribe certain representations to himself only if he can get a conceptual grasp of them, only if he can attribute *meaning* to them. Without that activity of "synthesis" taking or at least having taken place, there

would be no reason to consider representations as belonging to an "I" (as being "mine") and to assert that some such "I" does function as an identical bearer of a certain group of representations. The reference to an "I" is not a *given* feature of a group of representations, but it is bestowed upon them only due to their being taken up by a mental activity of synthesis. If it weren't for that activity of synthesis, we could perhaps talk about some neutral data of consciousness, but we would have no right to attribute them to an owner.

Perhaps one could be tempted to escape this conclusion by suggesting that synthesis might be necessary to guarantee the *recognition* of a mental content as belonging to me, but that no such synthesis would be needed to account for that content's *belonging* to me. Thus Kant could be read as making a point — an important one, to be sure — about self-knowledge, but not about self-identity. The subject would already *be* identical in his representations prior to synthesis and he would need the latter only to *recognize* them as his representations; a representation would have its owner from the very beginning, but the owner would be capable of consciously attributing it to himself only due to a synthesis.

We will not deny that there is an obvious sense in which *mental* data would still be *mental* even prior to an activity of synthesis. But whether such field of consciousness could still be called a *self* is dubious to say the least. Without synthesis, say Kant ". . . I should have as many-coloured and diverse self as I have representations of which I am conscious to myself."<sup>13</sup> But our notions of self *do* seem to imply at least some degree of unity and constancy; in fact, the lack of those features in the mental data taken by themselves is precisely the reason Kant deems it necessary to introduce his concept of synthesis. A "many-coloured and diverse self" could not *be* a self at all. The factors (mental synthesis and its rules) which supply the conditions of self-knowledge are thus at the same time responsible for the emergence of a self to be known. (In saying this we are perfectly consistent with Kant's overall strategy: the conditions of the possibility of the experience of objects are at the same time the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience). Once again, we are driven to the conclusion that the belonging of all representations to an owner is not their original feature, but an imprint left upon them by the process of synthesis. Thus selfhood is, for Kant, inseparable from mental *activity*. The only reason why representations are not neutral but referred to an owner is that consciousness emerges as an active center of mental syntheses, a "power of combination" as Kant calls it.<sup>14</sup> If it were possible to imagine a mind which would not be performing its mental activities of synthesis, that mind's representations could not be viewed as belonging to an "I."

It seems though, that our conclusions could be avoided if only we were willing to follow what Bennett calls the "analytic interpretation" of Kant's doctrine of the self.<sup>15</sup> Talk about the "analytic unity of consciousness" is taken by Bennett to mean that it would be *logically* impossible to entertain the idea of a mental content which would not belong to someone, to a sensing and thinking

I. And, in addition to *this* being an analytic truth, two further claims of that kind are found to be included in Kant's talk about the analytic unity of consciousness. These truths are: (I) that a person's mental states are necessarily his and his *only* and (II) that the having of a mental experience by the subject S necessarily includes the S's *immediate awareness* of himself as having that experience. Both of these claims seem quite plausible if, as Bennett puts it, we ought to consider Kant's moves as proceeding from a "Cartesian basis."<sup>16</sup> For once we adopt the point of view of the Cartesian *cogito*, two things are eliminated at one stroke. (I) I cannot wonder if the pain I feel is mine only or yours as well, since part of the difference in the epistemic status of physical objects on the one hand and mental states on the other is that the latter can only be "shared" in a metaphorical, not literal sense. Unlike my house, the pain that I feel can be similar to but never identical with the pain that you feel. The house, that is, can become our "common property" under specific legal provisions, while I cannot attribute any literal meaning to the thought that my pain is becoming really yours. (II) Within the Cartesian *cogito* the fact of having a mental experience entails an *immediate* awareness of it as belonging to its owner. For my coming to be aware of the pain I am having as "mine" is not a process of "working up" to that awareness through the application of some *criteria of identity*. I may need some such criteria in order to decide whether the pain I now feel comes from my gall-bladder or my liver; I need no criteria at all to decide that *I* am the one who feels this particular pain. Briefly, the "open question" argument does not apply when it comes to separating the occurrence of a mental state to the subject from his ability to ascribe it to himself; if a state *does* occur to a subject then it does *not* make any sense, for him, to ponder whether the state is indeed *his*. To be sure, all of this applies only to the subject's *present* mental states. But this is sufficient to show that the reference of at least some such states (those which can be captured in the first-person present-tense reports) to an owner *is* their original feature. On this reading of Kant, the mental contents that I now have (the pain that I feel, the patch of red that I see, etc.) would be mine and would be recognized as mine as a matter of *logical necessity* and without any reliance upon a synthesis. The latter would only be required to assure the ascription of the past experiences — those about which I can really wonder whether they did or did not occur to *me*.

In conformity with this conclusion, Bennett finds a new language to capture the connection between such central Kantian notions as those of self-consciousness, synthesis and understanding. First of all, self-consciousness implies the *unification* of various mental items occurring to one subject and the process of that unification just *is* what Kant means by (empirical) synthesis. The reason self-consciousness would have to presuppose such a synthesis is simple enough. To say that something is a content of a *single* mind, endowed with a specific history, implies that the item at issue be unified with other items which are to count as belonging to that particular mind. Now synthesis depends upon our ability to identify and reidentify an item over a period of time. This, in

turn, implies two things: (I) the idea of *satisfaction of criteria*, in the sense that the reidentification of a mental item at the time  $t$  and then  $t'$   $t''$  . . . etc. requires the conformity of that item to some definite *standards* of identity; (II) the *intellectual capacity* of the knower to grasp and to apply such criteria. It is the conjunction of (I) and (II) as conditions of each and every empirical synthesis that constitutes, according to Bennett,<sup>17</sup> the true meaning of the expression "transcendental synthesis." Thus the transcendental synthesis is not a process going on over and above the empirical synthesis: it is simply a set of conditions which must be met if that empirical synthesis is to produce the grasp of a mental item as belonging to one and the same self.

Now since the recognition of a present mental item as "mine," does *not* require any criteria, the transcendental synthesis does not condition the first-person present-tense reports about our mental states. On the other hand, such transcendental synthesis must underlie the subject's coming to establish the ownership of his *past* mental states. This is shown clearly by those cases where some process of sorting out my cognitions is clearly required to perform an identification of a mental item as "mine" — cases where I can really wonder whether this or that experience did in fact happen to me. In such cases the decision will depend upon successful handling of criteria of mental identity.

We are thus led to the conclusion that the only area where the doctrine of the transcendental synthesis can have application is the area of one's *past* experiences. Bennett acknowledges<sup>18</sup> that Kant "nowhere says this explicitly," but he adds at once that "This interpretation of Kant's half-thoughts about identity criteria is supported by his almost exclusive attention to identifying rules and by his preoccupation with temporal succession."<sup>19</sup> We must now examine Bennett's thesis more carefully.

Let us first restate the position attributed by Bennett to Kant: the transcendental synthesis is simply the formal skeleton of empirical-syntheses through which genuine problems concerning mental identity are resolved. To say that some of my mental states present a genuine problem as to their ownership is simply to say that their attribution to me is not a matter of logical necessity, but will have to depend upon successful application of criteria. No such criteria can be applied to one's *present* mental states as the very question "am I the owner of this experience I am now having?" is meaningless. Thus it is only with respect to my *past* ("did that experience really occur to me?") that the questions concerning the ownership of mental states require non-trivial answers yielded by the processes of synthesis.

There is no question that Kant — especially in the first version of the *Transcendental Deduction* — is indeed preoccupied with the temporal character of human experience. More than that. The whole strategy of Kant's treatment of the three syntheses (of apprehension, reproduction and recognition) seems to represent an attempt to show how concepts are needed to meet the challenge of unifying our experiences as they are slipping into the past. And yet the main body of Kant's argument is really independent of those con-



siderations. As A.C. Ewing put it, the focus on time “. . . is not necessary for the main argument of the transcendental deduction, though it is necessary for the particular account of the synthesis given in the first edition and for the proofs of the individual categories.”<sup>20</sup>

The key to correct understanding of Kant's doctrine lies in his often repeated claim<sup>21</sup> that the basic argument of the *Deduction* is applicable to *all* forms of finite, discursive cognition. For in those modes of knowledge where intuitions — be they spatio-temporal or not — are not *produced* by the self but *given* to it, the subject must take up and combine these intuitions, he must gain an intellectual grip upon them, “make sense” of them in order to secure the unity and coherence of his mental experience. Even if — *per impossibile* — human experience could become instantaneous, or could lose its temporal character altogether and would thus remain purely spatial, we would still need categories in order to bring intuitions to self-consciousness. It is thus *not* the case that synthesis is needed only to “work out” the ascription of past mental states to the subject. In order to grant Bennett his point (first-person, present-tense reports do not require any synthesis) one would have to assume that a human knower is capable of producing his data instead of having them given as material for intellectual processing and interpretation. But even if the subject's experiences were limited to the instantaneous present, he would still have to synthesize his data in order to ascribe them to himself: he would still have to gain a *grasp* of them by means of an appropriate conception, he would still have to endow them with *meaning*.

But, one could object, doesn't this reading apply only to the second version of the *Deduction*? For the argument as presented in the first edition of the *Critique* begins with the exposition of the three syntheses (apprehension, reproduction and recognition) which are all tied down to the specifically *temporal* form of experience. This is so obvious that it hardly needs any elaboration. One may add that the very basic distinction between the pure and the empirical syntheses of apprehension and recollection is predicated upon the assumption that those additional “pure” syntheses are needed in order to unify *time* itself (as opposed to the manifold *in* time). Thus the whole conceptual machinery that Kant is relying upon — indeed the very notion of something like pure synthesis — depends upon the *temporal* character of the sort of experience that is under consideration in the first edition of the *Deduction*.

And yet, if we move to its crucial section 3, where Kant tells us that he is now going to present his argument “in systematic interconnectedness” we are confronted with a significant shift in his vocabulary. In section 3 Kant restates the argument in two ways: first,<sup>22</sup> beginning with the unity of apperception and evolving experience as a result of that apperception's unity; second,<sup>23</sup> “starting from below,” as he puts it, (i.e. with the empirical elements of experience) and then spelling out how these elements must be organized in order to belong to apperception. These two ways do not provide us with a different argument and they should not be confused with the two genuinely different versions of

transcendental arguments (the “progressive” and the “regressive”) which Kant distinguishes in the *Prolegomena*. From the point of view of that latter work both moves in section 3 are equally “progressive”; they do not assume (as do the *Prolegomena*) the “fact of knowledge,” but attempt to justify its existence by demonstrating it to be the condition of the unity of self-consciousness.

But this is not the only thing that Kant’s two ways of arguing — from “above” and from “below” — have in common. What they also share is a complete lack of reference to *time*. In A 116 Kant says that in order to find the ground of unity and connectedness of representations we “must begin with pure apperception.” He does not add “and with time as form of our sensibility” or something to that effect. He then goes on to say — and these expressions will return time and again — that representations would be “nothing,” or of “no concern” to us if they could not be incorporated into self-consciousness. A familiar point follows: that representations could not belong to *one* self-consciousness without being *unified*. Kant then proceeds to discuss how the unity of various representations — and hence also the unity of self-consciousness — presupposes our activity of synthesizing those representations. Nothing at all is said about *time* as the factor necessitating the process of pure synthesis. To be sure, Kant does not yet make the point he will be hammering at in the second edition of the *Deduction*: he does not yet say that his argument applies to *any* discursive and finite mode of knowledge, be it spatio-temporal or not. Still, Kant’s formulations are so general and so carefully stripped off of any reference to time, that they are clearly compatible with what Kant will be saying in the second edition of the *Critique*.

Exactly the same observation can be applied to the exposition “from below.” Kant states again that appearances would be “nothing to us” if they did not belong to one self-consciousness. He then makes exactly the same point as in the opening paragraph of the *Deduction* in B; he asserts<sup>24</sup> that no “combination” *can* be given in sensibility and yet some form of combination *is* needed to secure the unity of self-consciousness. Kant does not say that no combination is to be found in sensibility on account of the specifically *temporal* character of the latter. He is simply making a general point about the nature of the “sense itself.”<sup>25</sup> Not much more is needed to convey the thought that every form of sensibility — which is always, in Kant’s vocabulary, inseparable from receptivity and discursivity of the subject — would have to undergo an intellectual combination (synthesis) in order to belong to self-consciousness of the knower. And this is exactly the point that Kant is expounding on so abundantly in the second edition of the *Deduction*.

What we are saying, then, is that there is no incompatibility between the first and the second version of the *Deduction*. In the years that have elapsed between the two editions of the *Critique* Kant might have become aware of an acute need to spell out in more detail an important aspect of synthesis: its applicability to *all* forms of discursive cognition. But it is still the same doctrine that Kant comes up with in the first and in the second version of the *Deduc-*

tion. Whatever may be the problems that the commentator will encounter while attempting to reconcile the two versions of the *Deduction* (e.g., Kant's changing views on the nature of the productive imagination) it does not seem to be the case that the core of Kant's argument in either version is in any way dependent upon the "given" fact of the *temporal* features of human experience.

And this brings us back, once again, to what Bennett called the "analytic interpretation" of Kant's doctrine of self-consciousness. As we have noted earlier while reviewing Bennett's position, the analytic interpretation would look infinitely more attractive if one could prove that the Kantian synthesis is not needed for the first-person present-tense statements; if, that is, one could prove that the necessity of synthesis arises only in connection with our statements about the *past*. But we have just seen that this is not the case for Kant. The necessity of synthesis extends over all stretches of human experience for the very reason that all of them are equally parts of a finite and hence necessarily discursive mind. The present does not have, in this respect, any privilege over the past. But if the first-person present-tense reports about one's own mental states are *not* immune to the work of synthesis, then even in such reports the attribution of mental states to an owner depends upon the presence of a form of mental activity. The subject cannot attribute representations to himself without actively gaining a mental grasp of them, without "making sense" of them by means of an appropriate conception (*Begriff*). Without such mental activity or "synthesis" taking place, representations would be neither "mine" nor "yours" for they would not be referred to a self at all.

\*       \*       \*

The self of pure apperception emerges as an *active* center of mental synthesis, but its *existence* is dependent on its ability to be *passive*, i.e., to receive intuitions. Such, at least — we shall see in a moment — is the position Kant is committed to. We must now attempt to make that position clear and to deal with those of its consequences which have a direct bearing upon the issues discussed in the present chapter.

If the pure I were only a logical or grammatical function attached to all of our representations, Kant would not have to worry about conditions under which we can be legitimate in ascribing existence to it. For the only self which would then need to be viewed as a real existent would be the *empirical* self; the pure self, on that hypothesis, would be nothing more but the formal structure of the empirical subject. And there is no particular difficulty in talking about our *empirical* self as a real existent. After all, the empirical self belongs to the world

of experience; it is therefore an object of the valid application of all the categories including the category of existence.

But Kant cannot stop at ascribing existence to the empirical self alone. He is compelled to talk about the existence of *pure* self as well. Apperception, he says — and he is referring to pure apperception — is “something real.”<sup>26</sup> In effect, the pure self is not simply the form of the empirical self. It has an area of *its own* activity; it is described as a “*power* [my italics — P.H.] of combination.” The exercise of that power is responsible for the construction of the objective world within which empirical mental activities appear as particular phenomena among other particular phenomena. Kant is therefore led, by the nature of the case, to search for a way of predicating existence of the pure self.

The expression “predicating” sums up the whole difficulty Kant encounters. For Kant cannot claim that the subsumption of the pure I under the category of existence is a piece of valid *knowledge*. He is in no position to advance such a claim, because the pure self cannot be exhibited in our *sensible* experience (being, as it is for Kant, the condition of our having any such experience at all) while, on the other hand, we are deprived of any ability to achieve *intellectual* intuition of it.

Since the existence of the pure self cannot be *known*, it may seem that the only way of accounting for its appearance within our vocabulary would be to construe it as something we can “think of,” but not “conceive.” This fundamental distinction between the non-schematized and schematized employment of the categories is always appealed to by Kant whenever he finds it necessary to refer to things beyond the limits of space and time. For even though such extension of our discourse cannot yield any *knowledge*, it nevertheless *is* legitimate insofar as the non-schematized categories are forms of “thought in general” and hence can be applied to all objects of thinking — be they spatio-temporal or not.<sup>27</sup>

Several places in the *Critique* suggest that such is indeed Kant’s way out of the dilemma.<sup>28</sup> The act of cogito is said to be a pure “thought”; all of the attributes of the pure self (not only its existence, but its simplicity, its permanence, etc.) are ascribed to it in a purely intellectual way, i.e. without any support by intuition.

However, after having interpreted the ascription of existence to the pure self as a purely intellectual act, Kant makes an astonishing claim. The proposition “I think” includes analytically “I exist”<sup>29</sup> and this, in turn, “expresses” an “indeterminate empirical intuition” or “indeterminate perception.”<sup>30</sup> These baffling statements raise a number of issues which have not ceased to puzzle commentators.<sup>31</sup> There are at least three questions which spring immediately to one’s mind. First, we are not yet given a reason *why* the ascription of existence to pure self must in some sense depend upon a perception. Second, we are at a loss to understand just *how* an act which is consistently described as purely intellectual could also depend upon some data which are supplied by empirical

intuition. Third, it is not clear at all in what sense the “perception” which is said to be bound up with our grasp of pure apperception as a real existent could count as conveying any reliable information; in fact, it is not even clear what kind of cognitive act Kant is talking about here. Let us try to deal with these questions one by one.

Why, then, does Kant hold that the purely intellectual act of attributing existence to the pure self must depend upon the presence of an (indeterminate) empirical intuition? The answer can be found in his statement to the effect that such intuition “here signifies only something *real* that is *given*”<sup>32</sup> [my italics — P.H.]. In other words — and this is quite consistent with the vocabulary of the *Critique* — Kant is saying that if it weren’t for the element of perception bound up with it, the pure I could never be given *as real*. In effect — as Hume already pointed out — there is a difference between attributing existence to an X in our *thought* of it on the one hand, and *believing* in that X’s existence on the other hand. An intellectual conception of something as existing does not yet entail a conviction about that thing’s real existence. In order for us to form such a conviction we must supplement the *conception* of a thing (be it spatio-temporal or not) with our *perception* of it. This is, as it were, Kant’s general rule which is never abandoned in the *Critique*. For example, when Kant talks about things in themselves, their existence is, on the one hand, attributed to them in a mere thought, but, on the other hand, it is also immediately *given*, insofar as things in themselves act upon and affect our sensibility. Similarly — as Kant argues at length in the *Postulates of Empirical Thought in General* — the reality of an empirical object is always dependent, at least indirectly, upon the givenness of an actual perception. Thus whenever we are confronted with the belief in the existence of something, that belief is always based on the element of perception. Kant is therefore perfectly consistent with himself when he emphasizes that the grasp of the pure I as an existent involves *both* an intellectual conception and a sensible intuition. (Were one to object, at this point, that (1) The pure I is identical with the I as it is “in itself” and (2) *Any* attribution of existence to things in themselves is incompatible with the entire framework of the *Critique*, we will reply that the self of pure apperception is *not* in any sense identical with the self as it is “in itself.” In spite of Kant’s rather careless terminology,<sup>33</sup> the identification of the pure apperception with the self as it is or would be “noumenally” cannot be sustained. This has been seen very clearly by those commentators who have paid special attention to the problem of “different selves” in the philosophy of Kant.<sup>34</sup> It is because the transcendental activities of synthesis are still *mental*, that we cannot locate them in the noumenal sphere where the whole distinction between the mental and the material is not operative.<sup>35</sup>)

Let us pass to the second difficulty we have mentioned earlier. How can the ascription of existence to the pure self be called an “analytic” — and hence logically necessary — judgment if it is also said to depend upon the presence of perception? The question is answered by Kant in the following way: “Without

some empirical representation to supply the material to thought, the actus, *I think*, would not, indeed take place; but the empirical is only the condition of the application, or of the employment, of the pure intellectual capacity."<sup>36</sup> This is quite consistent with Kant's overall view of human thinking as inherently finite and receptive. In conformity with this view, the self's activity of intellectual synthesis is dependent upon the self's being *affected* by some matter of experience. And this fact accounts for the apparent paradox involved in Kant's claim that the ascription of existence to the self is both logically necessary and dependent upon perception. For, on the one hand, the proposition "I think, I exist" — "I exist thinking," as Kant puts it<sup>37</sup> — cannot be an empirical proposition, since if I am really thinking it *must* be the case that my thinking is real; my existence thus is necessarily implied by my act of thinking. But, on the other hand, for the process of human thought to take place there must be something *given* (and hence, as given, revealed in perception) which sets thought off by presenting data demanding to be combined and made intelligible.<sup>38</sup>

We can see more clearly now why Kant insists that the data in question must be described as *indeterminate* empirical intuition or *indeterminate* perception. The operative expression — "indeterminate" — is first used in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*.<sup>39</sup> It refers to intuitions as they are — or would be — prior to the imposition of concepts upon them. Such intuitive data would not yet be referred to an *object*. For in order to objectify them we would have to subsume them under the categories. But the application of the categories to the data of sensibility depends upon the exercise of the self's activity of thinking. Now since what Kant means by the "indeterminate perception" is the very element which first sets in motion the self's activity of thinking, the perception in question must be given prior to and independently of the categories: ". . . the existence here referred to is not a category. The category as such does not apply to an indeterminately given object but only to one of which we have a concept and about which we seek to know whether it does or does not exist outside the concept."<sup>40</sup>

All of this brings us to the last question we have raised in connection with Kant's general strategy here at work: what is the cognitive status of the statement "I exist thinking"? More precisely, why does Kant refuse to classify that statement as a piece of *knowledge*, even though both intuition and thought condition the formulation of it (and thus, since intuition and thought are conditions of valid cognition, it would seem plausible to conclude that Kant *is* talking about knowledge after all)? The key to Kant's refusal lies precisely in the "indeterminate" character of that empirical intuition. For no knowledge is possible unless the corresponding intuition can be made *determinate* by means of an appropriate conception. But the intuition which underlies our belief in the existence of the pure self *cannot* be made determinate. Not because of a lack of a corresponding conception, but because, as the condition of pure self's ability to form and to handle any conceptions, that intuition must be given prior to and independently of concepts.

But this position leads at once to the following puzzle. The *cogito* is an *intellectual* act in which the subject and the object are the same: in saying “I think” the subject is forming a conception of himself as a thinking form attached to all representations. That conception has *no intuitive elements at all*, and this is why Kant goes so far as to claim that the “I think” “. . . was not included [in *Transcendental Logic*] in the general list of transcendental concepts, but must yet be counted as belonging to that list, without, however, in the least altering it or making it defective.”<sup>41</sup> And since the “I think” includes analytically “I exist,” the ascription of existence to the self is itself the work of a purely *intellectual* operation, warranted by the mere laws of logic. But — and here lies the whole puzzle — all of this is really incompatible with what Kant was telling us about the “indeterminate perception”. Let us quote his own words: “The «I think» expresses an indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e. perception (and thus shows that sensation, which as such belongs to sensibility, lies at the basis of this existential proposition”);<sup>42</sup> “. . . in the proposition «I think» [an indeterminate perception] is denoted as such. . .”<sup>43</sup> Admittedly, these expressions are not models of clarity, but they do convey one specific thought. In making the judgment “I exist thinking” the speaker must “denote” (*bezeichnen*) not only the pure form of thought, but the element of indeterminate intuition as well. In grasping our thinking *as real* we are grasping it as given through perception. Now, all of this could be accommodated by Kant’s conceptual framework as long as the intuition at issue were to be given through its normal channel, i.e. through human *sensibility*. But this is clearly not so in the present case. For the ascription of existence by the pure self to itself is said to be a strictly *intellectual* act and yet it is precisely in *this* act, that the “indeterminate perception” must be grasped by the pure self.

Now, if we were asked to believe that the pure apperception is to grasp a *determinate* perception, we would have no problem here. For the very function of apperception is to determine intuitions by concepts and to grasp them as so determined. But this is *not* what Kant is here asking us to accept. We are asked to attribute to the “I think” of pure apperception the capacity to grasp an *indeterminate* intuition. However, as Kant himself points out in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, indeterminate intuitions — intuitions unsubsided under concepts — can only be given to *sensibility*. We are thus asked to attribute to the pure apperception a capacity which belongs to sensibility. This, of course, goes against the most fundamental assumptions of critical philosophy. And it does not help at all to talk — as Kant does in an often quoted footnote from the *Prolegomena*<sup>44</sup> — about the “feeling” (*Gefühl*) that the subject is said to have of his own existence. Kant himself points out in his *Anthropology*<sup>45</sup> that feelings belong to sensibility. Whatever, then, may be their special status as contrasted with the status of perceptions and sensations, they cannot be supplied by intellect.

To sum up. The act of *cogito* is the human self’s purely intellectual act and yet, at the same time, it includes a feeling or a perception. To put it differently,

the intellectual self of pure apperception does not find sensory material supplied to it from outside (by a distinct faculty of sensibility), but discovers it *within itself* in the very act of grasping its existence. *The thinking self turns out to be identical with the sensing and feeling self.*

There is another, less abstract, way of putting this point. In both its cognitive and its practical branches critical philosophy is based upon a sharp distinction between the notion of the human self as passive and sensible on the one hand and active and rational on the other. As a passive and sensible subject, man is simply a part of nature. But, due to his possession of pure apperception, he stands above the kingdom of nature. Both in knowledge and in action pure apperception imposes order upon data (intuitions or inclinations) which are supplied to it from *outside*, since they stem from man's anchorage in nature.

But this view cannot be maintained. The active I of apperception (and we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, that there can be no I without mental activity) has just turned out to be passive as well. Such is the logical outcome of *Kant's own* moves and arguments. The referent, as it were, of the expression "pure I" can never be construed as a purely rational, supersensible self, superimposed upon man's "natural" life of sense and inclination. For if the pure self cannot grasp its own existence without feeling and sensing, then it is the very rational ego itself which must be a part of nature, as only a being of nature is capable of having intuitions, feelings and inclinations. *Since the pure I feels and senses, it is a feeling and a sensing I.* It has intellectual functions too, but we cannot say any more that man as he "knows himself through pure apperception"<sup>46</sup> is a "purely intelligible object."<sup>47</sup> For in the very act of apperception man reveals himself as a sentient being. We must thus "naturalize" the pure self. The capacity to act and to know according to principles cannot be attributed to a supersensible ego. It is man as a natural, sentient creature who develops and employs that capacity.



## NOTES TO CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kemp Smith transl., New York 1965, pp. B 133-B 135.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, A 126.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, A 103.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, A 197, B 242.

<sup>5</sup> Norman Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason,"* New York 1962, p. xli.

<sup>6</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 197, B 242.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, A 80, B 106.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, A 68, B 93.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, A 108.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, A 69, B 94.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, A 68, B 93.

<sup>12</sup> In section 12 of the *Critique* (B 114-115) Kant devotes a good deal of attention to the unifying function of concepts. Concepts are said to endow our intuitions with three features. *First*, a concept provides a set of intuitions with a "qualitative unity" — this to the extent to which different and heterogeneous representations appear, when subsumed under a concept, as aspects of one and the same object having a definite identity. *Second*, a correct subsumption of a set of intuitions under a common concept will produce what Kant calls, somewhat loosely, the "truth" of our cognition. In other words, if intuitions are not misinterpreted then the cognitive process will continue to exhibit unity and coherence. For example, when moving around the object I have labeled "house" I will not be surprised by discovering some features which would be incompatible with any conception of what a house is; I will continue to perceive such things as windows, doors, stairs, etc. Should it thus turn out that all of my particular perceptions and representations will fit smoothly into the original conception "house" (thereby becoming what Kant calls "the qualitative plurality of characters") and do not require *any other* interpretation, then we will have reached the *third* moment, the "qualitative completeness." The series of explorations of an object has yielded one constant *meaning*.

<sup>13</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 134.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, B 153.

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Bennett, *Kant's Analytic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1966, p. 114. Strawson's interpretation is very similar. In his review of *The Bounds of Sense* (J. Bennett, *Strawson on Kant, The Philosophical Review*, July 1968, pp. 340-349) Bennett identifies enthusiastically with Strawson's reading of Kant ("The dominant problem has been solved, in all essentials, by Strawson," p. 340).

<sup>16</sup> The expression is first introduced in *Kant's Dialectic* (Jonathan Bennett, *Kant's Dialectic*, Cambridge University Press 1974, sect 22-23) but it captures quite well what Bennett wants to convey in his treatment of Kant's *Transcendental Deduction*. (see: J. Bennett, *Kant's Analytic*, Cambridge University Press 1966, pp. 103-104).

<sup>17</sup> *Kant's Analytic*, p. 113.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123 (see, too, pp. 121-122).

<sup>20</sup> A.C. Ewing, *A short commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, The University of Chicago Press, sixth impression, Chicago 1974, p. 72)

<sup>21</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 135, B 139, B 145, B 153.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, A 116-A 119.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, A 120.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, B 419.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, B 166, footnote.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, B 157, B 158.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, A 353.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, B 423.

<sup>31</sup> See especially: Benno Erdmann, *Kant's Kritikismus*, Leipzig 1878, p. 56; H.J. de Vleeschauwer, *La déduction transcendentale dans l'oeuvre de Kant*, Vol. II, pp. 579, 580, 581.

<sup>32</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 423.

<sup>33</sup> Although Kant *does* take some steps to indicate the difference between pure apperception and noumenal self: "An indeterminate perception here signifies only something real that is given, given indeed to thought in general, and so not as appearance, nor as a thing in itself (noumenon), but as something which actually exists. . . ." (B 423 footnote); In the act of cogito I ". . . represent myself to myself neither as I am nor as I appear to myself" (B 429); ". . . in the consciousness of myself in mere thought I am the *being itself*, although nothing in myself is thereby given for thought" (ibid.)

<sup>34</sup> B. Erdmann, op. cit., pp. 53-54; Robert Paul Wolff, *The Autonomy of Reason*, Harper and Row, New York 1974, pp. 9-15.

<sup>35</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 358-A 360.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., B 423.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., B 428.

<sup>38</sup> The argument is well explained in H.J. de Vleeschauwer, op. cit., pp. 590-592.

<sup>39</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 20, B 34.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., B 423.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., A 431, B 399.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., B 423.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> I. Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, The Library of Liberal Arts, p. 82, footnote.

<sup>45</sup> I. Kant, *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale 1978, p. 94.

<sup>46</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 547, B 575.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

## CONCEPTS AND REALITY

Let us review briefly some of the points which we have made in our Introduction. The emphasis upon an essential connection between concepts and sensibilia is an important part of the overall strategy of idealism. As Kant has put it, "thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts blind." This remark has established the philosophical guidelines for German Idealism. For an idealist, then, there seems to exist a strict inter-dependence between concepts and intuition: concepts are significant only to the extent to which they serve as tools of an (at least possible) identification and ordering of sensible particulars; sensibilia, in turn, can be accessible to a human knower only insofar as they are subsumed under the concepts and rules of our thinking.

There are thus two claims that idealism will be led to advance: (a) in order to be *known*, reality (i.e., the world of spatio-temporal sensibilia) must conform to the structure of thought — to its concepts, rules, etc.; (b) since knowledge is knowledge *of reality*, there must be a sense in which sensibilia are distinct from the concepts and rules by means of which they are made comprehensible to us. On the one hand, then, in the process of knowledge man must be a "spontaneous" subject: he must be able to interpret and order reality through a conceptual scheme. On the other hand, he must be a "receptive," sentient creature — for without sensing and intuiting he would be living in the shadowy realm of "empty concepts."

We shall attempt to demonstrate that idealism cannot reconcile the demand of human *receptivity* (reality must be distinct and independent from our conceptual scheme) with the demand of human *spontaneity* (reality counts for us only insofar as it is articulated in our conceptual scheme). For in order to reconcile these two demands one would have to attribute the functions of feeling and of sensing to the intellectual self. To be sure, this is precisely the view the idealist is *driven* to adopt as he struggles to give its due to the requirement of human passivity. But such view cannot be *accommodated* by the idealistic vocabulary. The only way to accommodate it would be to "naturalize" the self — to conceive its emergence as part and parcel of man's attempt to deal with his natural needs and drives. But to do this, would be to abandon idealism altogether.

The *Transcendental Deduction* — the centerpiece of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* — bridges the gap between intuitions and pure concepts of understanding by showing that only by being subjected to the latter could intuitions exist for our self-consciousness (pure apperception). One of the most important parts in Kant's argument is his doctrine of transcendental idealism: the categories can be legitimately applied to the objects of experience since those objects are not identical with things as they really are, but are produced by mind's activity of ordering its own representations. This view implies at once the task of revising the meaning of the expression "object of knowledge." Contrary to the assumptions of (naive or critical) realism, in order to assess the value of our cognitions we cannot match them against an independent reality. As the knower has nothing but his own representations to fall back upon — ". . . outside of our knowledge we have nothing which we could set over against this knowledge as corresponding to it."<sup>1</sup> — the correctness of our beliefs can only be measured against an *inner* standard. Such a standard is thought into our representations as mind subjects them to a *form of law*. For it is precisely this lawful quality of our representations which distinguishes them from private mental contents.

The immediate difficulty which such a position has to confront is this: if the form of an object in general (the law-like character of our representations) is ". . . nothing else than the formal unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of representations,"<sup>2</sup> in what sense can we still talk about reality as *distinct* from the pure self and its rule directed activities of synthesis?

The question can be answered easily on the secure ground of the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. There, the distinction between forms of sensibility and concepts of understanding is sharp and clear; and to the extent that the object is intuited or sensed it is always *given*. But this distinction disappears progressively in the course of Kant's argument in the *Transcendental Deduction* and in the *Analytic of Principles*. Step by step, the allegedly "intuitive" features of experience are reinterpreted as conceptual constructions. The change is so dramatic that some scholars did not hesitate to classify the *Aesthetic* as a pre-critical text; without going so far, Kemp Smith considers Kant's changing views as plainly incompatible.<sup>3</sup>

This shift in Kant's position is not, of course, a matter of accident. It is implied by the overall structure of Kant's argument in the *Deduction*. For if we follow through to its logical conclusions Kant's view that no "representations" could exist for our self-consciousness without being formed by the rules of understanding, then the same must and does apply to the representations of *space and time*. And if this is the case, then it must turn out, sooner or later, that all the allegedly "given" and "non conceptual" aspects of intuiting discovered by the *Aesthetic* will have to be seen as products of intellectual syntheses performed by understanding.

The treatment given to *time* is here of special importance to us. For of the two forms of human sensibility time is clearly the privileged one. First, because

time represents the form of both the inner and the outer intuitions (although the latter have a temporal quality only on account of their appearance as representations of a subject whose inner mental life is temporally arranged). Second, because Kant's argument in the *Deduction* — or at least that part of it which is concerned with the specifically *human* mode of discursive cognition — can be summarized as consisting of the three following steps: (I) the framework of time is subjected to the categories, (II) the empirical manifold is *in* time, hence (III) the empirical manifold too is subjected to the categories. Thus if we can show that the "intuitive" features of time turn out to be, as Kant's argument unfolds, the product of conceptual constructions we will have shown that the corresponding features of the temporal *content* are of conceptual nature as well.

The shift in Kant's views of time is noticeable from the very beginning of the *Transcendental Deduction*.

In the first edition of the *Critique* the argument of the *Deduction* starts with its "subjective" part, i.e., with the analysis of mental dispositions and activities which will be called upon to explain the emergence of organized experience. It is in this context, that Kant presents us with his list of the three syntheses — or, to be more precise, with one unified "threefold" synthesis composed of apprehension, reproduction and recognition — and attempts to identify their respective contributions to the construction of the objective world of experience. Kant first considers the *empirical* syntheses — mental activities we are more or less familiar with from introspection — and he then proceeds to *infer* the corresponding transcendental syntheses as conditions of the possibility of the former and hence also of our experience. And in the process of accomplishing this task Kant reformulates his earlier teaching about human intuition in general and about time in particular.

Already in his treatment of the "synthesis of apprehension in intuition" Kant deemphasized dramatically the role of sensibility. To be sure, he still refers to "inner sense" as being the source of the temporal order of our representations. He has not yet gone so far as to claim — as he will do in the second version of the *Deduction* — that the very concept of succession is the product of understanding. Still, when we get down to the details of his analysis, the contribution of the inner sense is almost negligible from the very beginning. ". . . intuition [. . .] does indeed offer a manifold, but a manifold which can never be represented as a manifold, and as contained *in a single representation*, save in virtue of such a synthesis [of apprehension]."<sup>4</sup> This sentence is put forward as the conclusion of an argument in which Kant attempts to demonstrate two points: (1) that our perception involves the apprehension of a unity of several distinct elements and (2) that neither such distinct elements, nor, still less, such unity can be found in sensibility itself. Let us take these claims one by one. Every organized representation — every representation, that is, which is to become part of our self-conscious mental life and hence also part of our knowledge — is built up of several elements which our mind is aware of as

distinct aspects of its perceptual experience. If we tried — to elaborate somewhat on one of Kant's own examples<sup>5</sup> — to watch a play or read a novel without sharply discriminating between parts of the plot, then the unified perception of the whole story could not take place; its different stages would overlap creating the confusion in the mind of the reader or the spectator. Now this awareness of perceptual differences is impossible without a special act of attention through which mind separates them and sets them apart. This is the first function of the synthesis of apprehension. Its next function consists in bringing the distinct perceptual elements into a unity. Thus my discrimination of different stages of a play is only a part in my effort to apprehend the entire plot as it unfolds itself on the stage. Now this *empirical* function of apprehension is paralleled by its *transcendental* function. For it is not just the perception of what unfolds *in* time, but the representation of *time itself* that will demand a synthesis of apprehension. In effect, our representation of time requires the same two mental operations we have seen at work in the perception of a literary plot: our ability to separate and to hold apart distinct elements of the representation (in this case: instants of time) and then also a mental act, by means of which these distinct elements are brought together into a unity (of an hour, or of a day, etc.). We are thus led to posit the activity of the *pure* synthesis of apprehension, without which no representation of time would be possible.<sup>6</sup>

But the performance of the synthesis of apprehension is dependent upon our capacity to recollect and retain our past representations in the "synthesis of reproduction in imagination." Clearly — to return to the earlier example — if I am to be in a position to discriminate between different stages of a play, then I must be able to keep in memory all the scenes and episodes which have already been played out on the stage. If my constant effort to recollect and sort out the past were to terminate all of a sudden, I would not be able to make sense of what is going on on the stage right now. And the same dependence of apprehension upon recollection can be noticed in our representation of time as such.<sup>7</sup> For I must have not just the sense of my past experience, but the sense of past as past; indeed — and this is a matter of logical necessity for Kant — without having such a sense of the past in general I would be in no position to interpret some of my present empirical representations as referring me to (being memories of) what has already taken place. However, what is *not* a matter of logical necessity on the one hand and of intuitive givenness on the other hand is the fact that I *do* have such a sense of the past at all. A special act of mind is needed to explain the fact that the past is kept alive, as it were, that a temporal slice of our mental life is not forgotten as soon as it ceases to be present. Thus the synthesis of reproduction too has its transcendental function, to which Kant attributes our representation of the past.

Both the synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of reproduction lead up to the third and perhaps the most important stage of the "threefold synthesis" — the synthesis of the recognition in concept. This is the mental function which Kant attempts to illuminate by exploring the very meaning of

the word "notion" (*Begriff*). Clearly, in order to form a representation of the play, I must have some notion of what the play is all *about*. Only when I do have such a notion does the play begin to "make sense" to me and the sequence of perceptions orders itself into a unified representation of the plot.

It has often been noted that Kant does not talk explicitly about the pure synthesis of recognition, even though he does distinguish the pure syntheses of apprehension and reproduction. But this can only be interpreted as a sin of omission. Kant's argument simply does not make sense unless we attribute the transcendental function to the synthesis of recognition as well. For one thing, the synthesis of recognition is simply one of the three aspects of one and the same synthesis which is said to have both empirical and transcendental applications: thus the claim that one of those aspects is devoid of its transcendental function would be hard to reconcile with Kant's overall view of the threefold synthesis. Moreover, nothing that Kant says about the synthesis of recognition on the one hand and our representation of time on the other hand, would justify the claim that the latter is in no need of the former. In effect, if reproduction and apprehension equally presuppose recognition and if our representation of time is in need of the two former stages of synthesis, then that representation must be subject to recognition as well. To be more precise: in order to discriminate and to hold apart different instants of time *and* in order to relate the present to the past, we must have a "notion" of what time is all about — we must know, for example, that the past cannot become present again, that all episodes can be subsumed under one temporal chronology and so on.

Perhaps this last point is the best place to start if we want to identify with more precision both the need for and the function of the recognition of time. The *Transcendental Aesthetic* advances the view that the proposition "different times are but parts of one and the same time" is a synthetic a priori proposition, which is not to be arrived at by an analysis of concepts, but requires an intuitive justification.<sup>8</sup> Now, even if we grant for a moment that the proposition at issue is a synthetic one (and, in effect, the conception of many time-series which do not belong to one and the same chronology does not seem to be logically contradictory) Kant's argument in the *Deduction* makes it hard to see how such a piece of *knowledge* could ever be derived from intuition. We would be much closer to the doctrines of the *Deduction* if we held that our conception of time as "one and the same" is implied by the fact that the existence of *many* unrelated temporal chronologies would be incompatible with the necessary unity of pure apperception. Kant himself will take that line in one of his *Reflexionen*.<sup>9</sup>

Let us take another example. The *Aesthetic* argues that synthetic a priori knowledge in Euclidean geometry and in the science of motion (mechanics) is based on intuitions of space and time. In order to play that role space and time must be composed of homogeneous units. Now, as Kant argues in the *Axioms of Intuition*, knowledge of *determinate* spatial and temporal objects (with their

particular sizes, durations, etc.) cannot be produced unless the spatio-temporal manifold is made *measurable*, which is in turn possible only through its subsumption under the (intellectual) category of quantity.<sup>10</sup>

But, one could object, even if all of this is true, even if the pure synthesis of recognition is needed to form a representation of time, surely there must be at least *some* important aspects of that representation which stem from intuition and from intuition *alone*. Surely, one would like to object, there is *something* to be preserved from the teaching of one *Aesthetic*.

Such hopes become quickly extinguished as we move on to the second edition of the *Critique*. In preparing the second version of the *Deduction* Kant has indeed succeeded — at least as far as our conception of time is concerned — in his ambition “. . . to remove, wherever possible, difficulties and obscurity.”<sup>11</sup> Abandoning any effort at coming to terms with the positions of the *Aesthetic* Kant is now telling us that

Even time itself we cannot represent, save insofar as we attend, in the *drawing* of a straight line (which has to serve as the outer figurative representation of time), merely to the act of synthesis of the manifold whereby we successively determine inner sense, and in so doing attend to the succession of this determination in inner sense. Motion as an act of the subject (not as a determination of an object) and therefore the synthesis of the manifold in space, first produces the concept of succession — if we abstract from this manifold and attend solely to the act through which we determine the *inner* sense according to its form. The understanding does not, therefore, find in inner sense such a combination of the manifold, but *produces* it, in that it *affects* that sense.<sup>12</sup>

Before we say something more specific about this significant passage, let us make one preliminary observation concerning the general thrust of Kant's argument here: we are told in no uncertain terms that our experience of temporal succession is not a “given” of sensibility, but a product of conceptual synthesis. Riehl wants to add<sup>13</sup> that it is not so much succession itself, as our consciousness of succession which could not exist without such a conceptual synthesis. So be it. But this means, in any case, that for a human *knower* there would be no succession at all without the concept of time. True, Kant's use of the word *Begriff* is sometimes rather loose — he is known to have employed it in a variety of contexts, as synonymous with such expressions as “idea,” “representation,” etc.<sup>14</sup> But this is certainly not the case in the *present* context; Kant talks here about a concept which has its seat in our *understanding*.

This new view of time is put forward in a special sub-section of the *Deduction*<sup>15</sup> where Kant attempts to deal with the “paradox” of self-knowledge: we do not know our self as it is “in itself,” but only as we are “inwardly affected” by it; we are thus affected by ourselves and this seems to Kant to present a puzzle to be solved. His solution — the historical antecedents of which in the psychology of Tetens are well known<sup>16</sup> — is to trace back the “self-affection” of the subject to our activity of determining space and (indirectly) the spatial shapes and sizes of physical objects. Kant's main point is as follows: In order to represent something as a triangle, a line, etc., I must *grasp* it as such, i.e., I must set and arrange my representations in space according to a rule. This activity of grasping and determining space “affects” the inner sense and is



represented by the subject as a temporally ordered series of mental acts performed by his empirical self. Time, therefore, is not to be found in sensibility. It results only from the pure self's mental activities being mapped onto the inner sense. To be sure, if the self did not have the capacity to be affected by its own activities of synthesis — if, that is, the self was not receptive and sensible — we would not have developed our conception of time. But this is no argument at all against Kant's point. For a self which would not be receptive and sensible would also employ no categories to process its data<sup>17</sup> and yet it does not follow from this that the categories ought to be attributed to sensibility. By the same token, the concept of time may very well depend upon man's status as a receptive being and still have its seat in human *thinking*.

But why, exactly, does Kant claim that the subject's ability to form a representation of time depends upon his attending to the act of synthesis involved in such peculiar operation as the drawing of a straight line? For one thing, Kant is here implicitly assuming what he will be elaborating on in his later argument in the *Analogies of Experience*: only *spatial* points of reference can provide us with a fixed system for measuring the relations of simultaneity, succession and permanence. The location of a part of space or the spatial position of an occurring physical event do not depend on how and when *I* happen to apprehend them. "For space alone is determined as permanent, while time, and therefore everything that is in inner sense, is in constant flux."<sup>18</sup> But this does not go far enough to explain why the objective ordering of our fleeting temporal perceptions can only be grasped in the representation of a "line being drawn." Kant's reason for this further claim is as follows. First of all, in order to form a representation of the irreversibility of time I cannot consider a *ready-made* spatial line. For "... parts [of space] are coexistent; it is an aggregate, not a series."<sup>19</sup> Hence, in order to form a conception of time as an irreversible chronological order I must attend to a line as it is being *drawn* (at least in imagination); only then do I gain a conception of some parts of space (the parts *already* drawn) being irreversibly prior to the others (those that I am *about* to draw). Second, the representation of a *line* is the only representation capable of exhibiting the essential lack of coexistence (simultaneity) between different parts of time. This is not to say that the temporal *content* cannot stand in relations of simultaneity. Clearly, several perceptions can be given in one and the same instant of time. But every such instant itself is exclusive of all the others: "Coexistence is not a mode of time itself; for none of the parts of time coexist; they are all in succession to one another."<sup>20</sup>

Thus such crucial features of time as its unity, homogeneity, irreversibility and indeed its very quality of succession are not "given" but *constructed* by the subject as the latter apprehends and determines space. Nothing more is needed to justify Kant's claim that the temporal organization of experience is not found in sensibility but produced by understanding. And indeed in one of his *Reflexionen* Kant does not hesitate to dot this *i*: "Dass die Zeit durch eine Linie (die doch ein Raum ist) und der Raum durch eine Zeit (eine Stunde gehens)

ausgedrückt wird, ist ein *Schematism der Verstandsbegriffe*." [My italics.-P.H.]<sup>21</sup> This suppression of the "given" — followed through to its last implications by the Neo-Kantians of the Marburg School — is perfectly consistent with the overall direction of the *Deduction*. It is not just that we cannot *know* anything that would not be derived from our conceptual scheme, but — first and foremost — any such "bare" intuition or "pre-conceptual" appearance would "not in the least concern us,"<sup>22</sup> it ". . . would be nothing to us; and since it has in itself no objective reality it would be nothing at all."<sup>23</sup>

But, one could object, this is only part of the story. For even if the *formal* conditions of empirical knowledge were to be evolved out of our conceptual scheme, it would still not follow that the *matter* of experience is a conceptual construction. And such is, in effect, Kant's own, repeatedly stated view.

Now there is one use of the expression "matter of experience" which is not going to be helpful at all. It will not do to interpret the matter of experience as simply a limiting factor — originating in the "affections" of the knower by things in themselves — which imposes restrictions upon our empirical knowledge. True, it is indeed the case, according to Kant, that when we say A causes B, the form of the (causal) law is here limited by the "given" fact of B's (and not C's or D's) dependence upon A. Yet if this is *all* that we want to understand by the phrase "matter of experience" then the radical idealistic conclusions of much of the post-Kantian and neo-Kantian thought seem, once again, perfectly justified. For in order to interpret the matter of experience as an effect of the affections of the subject by some independent reality we must rely upon synthetic a priori knowledge of at least some features of that independent reality — of its ability to produce the matter of experience, of its adaptability to the forms of our understanding, etc., etc. But then it follows at once — in agreement with the very Kantian principle that the conditions of the possibility of our knowledge of objects are at the same time the conditions of the possibility of objects of knowledge — that the notion of some independent reality does not correspond to anything outside of our conceptual scheme; it is nothing but another construction of the knower. And thus if we want to claim that the non-formal elements of knowledge will refer us beyond the conceptual scheme we must consider them as *more* than simply the boundary conditions of valid empirical cognitions. In the *Critique*, Kant makes clear moves to explore precisely that possibility. We shall now try to follow these moves.

For the reasons which will become apparent as we go on, we shall first consider carefully Kant's answer to the challenge mounted by the Descartes/Berkeley "material idealism."<sup>24</sup> In the *Refutation of Idealism* — a brief, but important section added up in the second edition of the *Critique* — Kant will argue that the *temporal* character of our mental life implies directly, and without any inference, the empirical reality of objects in space. But Kant's position in the *Refutation* is somewhat ambiguous. It is not entirely clear whether the *Refutation's* point of departure is the subject's awareness of the temporal quality of his *representations* or the awareness of his very *existence*

in time. Kant urges us to adopt the second reading in a long footnote in the *Preface* to the second edition of the *Critique*.<sup>25</sup> But his formulation of the argument in the *Refutation* itself invites the first interpretation as Kant repeatedly stresses the peculiarity of our consciousness of the temporal quality of our *representations*. Read in this way — which is consistent with the entire thrust of the *Analogies of Experience*, where our ability to form temporal representations (with their features of permanence, simultaneity and succession) is said to be dependent upon our grasp of objects in space — the argument is simple enough. As an empirical self I am conscious of my representations as arranged in a temporal sequence. But — and Kant restates here his point from the *First Analogy* — in order to determine my representations as *succeeding* each other I must cast them over against something *permanent*. A conception of change, that is, can only be developed in conjunction with the conception of something that does not change. But, Kant continues, the required permanent element cannot be just another empirical representation of mine — a sensation or an image belonging to the collection of my own private mental contents. For were this to be the case then the representation at issue would *itself* be a part of the temporal flow and *its* place, in turn, would have to be established over against the background of something permanent. Hence the latter cannot turn out to be a member of the class of my mental episodes, but must be viewed as something sharply *distinct* from them — albeit still fully accessible to acts of empirical apprehension. But — as the *Analogies* purported to demonstrate — such permanent entity set over against an unfolding mental history of an empirical self can only be found in *space*. And hence the existence of spatial objects is directly implied by the empirical subject's awareness of his own representations. Furthermore, Kant is convinced that his proof of the reality of the external world squares nicely with our common usage of the terms "inner" and "outer." For, as he points out elsewhere,<sup>26</sup> an "external object" is always viewed as an entity endowed not just with temporal but with *spatial* features as well, while what is *only* temporal is considered as being simply a part of our own mental history, as merely an "inner object."

While commenting on his *Refutation of Idealism* in the *Preface* to the second edition of the *Critique* Kant not only acknowledges some "obscurities" burdening certain expressions used in the proof itself, but he also goes to great pains to emphasize that his aim was not to talk about consciousness of our *representations* as temporally arranged, but about consciousness of our *existence* as determined in time. Thus the focus of the *Refutation* is now said to be directed towards a somewhat different aspect of our experience. Furthermore, Kant now concedes that were we to analyze consciousness of our representations *alone*, we would never find in them any reference to independent spatial objects outside us. It is only the awareness of our existence in time which can lead us beyond the realm of private mental contents.

This distinction may seem to be purely academic, but it really isn't. For if we consider temporal change only as feature of our representations, then it does

not seem impossible to claim that there could be one — very special — enduring representation against which we could establish the chronological position of all the others. We could think, for example, of some mental image the knower would permanently hold onto in his mind in order to sort out and arrange other representations in a temporal sequence. Granted, this could never go beyond the subject's *private* temporality; we could not hope to establish an intersubjective temporal framework starting with an individual subject's image, no matter how permanent and enduring the latter might turn out to be. But this point only brings out with more clarity that *my* permanent representation is completely different from a representation (enduring or not) of a permanent external object.

Kant believes that the difficulty can be overcome if we take, as our point of departure, the self's consciousness of its very *existence* in time. Let us first spell out the distinction Kant is trying to make. As a bearer of a certain group of representations, my empirical self cannot be *itself* one of those representations. In my capacity of an empirical subject I entertain images, sensations, thoughts and so on. But I am not myself an image or a sensation of mine — and this precisely to the extent to which those images and sensations are all *my* mental experiences. Of course, the empirical self is still a posit of the transcendental self, but so too are the very spatial objects we are attempting to contrast with one's private representations. Taken in conjunction with what Kant says in the second *Preface*, the *Refutation of Idealism*, then, comes down to the following argument. If I were concerned only with establishing the chronology of my private representations, then the required "permanent" element could still be some enduring image or thought in me. But I cannot be concerned only with establishing the chronology of my representations. For my empirical self is not one of my representations and yet it too exists in time. Of this existence I *may*, of course, form a representation (I may think of my empirical personality in terms of my habits, dispositions, etc.) but my empirical self is distinct and independent from my thinking it or imagining it.<sup>27</sup> Hence I must be able to construct a temporal framework which would encompass not just my various representations but my empirical reality as well. But to say this is to imply that what I need here to establish the chronological framework must be *more* than just a representation of mine. For even if I interrupted my own representation of myself as a temporal self, I would still *be* such a temporal self; and if we agree that change can only be conceived as occurring against permanence, then a change which occurs *independently* of my representations implies a similar independence of its permanent counterpart. All of the above is a matter of *logical necessity* and this is why Kant points out that consciousness of my existence in time is "bound up in the way of identity" with consciousness of a relation to something outside me. Indeed to say that the notion of change is logically inseparable from the notion of permanence; to say further, that the change at issue takes place whether I do or do not represent it, implies clearly that what counts as permanent must be distinct and separable from my representation of it.<sup>28</sup>

What is important for us in that proof is Kant's view that the empirical self is bound up "by the way of identity" with the world of independent physical objects set in space. For Kant makes a very similar claim about the *pure* self. And it is significant that the claim is put forward in — among other places — the very same passage where Kant deals with the empirical subject.<sup>29</sup> In both cases, Kant argues, the relation of the self to external reality is logically necessary. In both cases, that is, the self can only be conceived as confronting something independent of it — a similarity which has not escaped the attention of commentators.<sup>30</sup> And, to this extent, Kant's interpretation of the empirical ego as inseparable from what exists outside it, can shed significant light upon his view of the pure self's relation to external reality.

But this analogy can only be helpful up to a point. For the empirical self is always already situated in the world of physical objects. The emergence of objects over against the *empirical* self presents no problem for Kant, since the objective world of experience is dependent upon mental activities of the *pure* self. But, by the same token, the analogy between the empirical self and its relation to an independent reality and a similar relation in the case of the pure self must break down. The reality of the pure self cannot be bound up with the reality of physical objects since it is due to the mental activity of the former that the physical world is constructed. And thus if we still want to view the existence of the pure self as somehow bound up with an independent reality, that reality cannot be construed as identical with the world of objective experience, organized by the categories.

This point brings us back to the thread of our argument in Chapter I, where we have seen that the reality of the pure self had to be secured *prior to and independently of* all the categories. This is why — as we saw earlier — Kant has felt the need to talk about the pure self's "indeterminate perception" of its own existence. And, for exactly the same reasons, exactly the same solution has to be applied to the problem of the mode in which the *external* reality is given to the pure self.

We are thus led back to the solution Kant adopted while analyzing the principle of the *cogito*. The pure self's reality was said to be bound up with an "indeterminate empirical intuition" or an "indeterminate perception" — expressions which refer to the sensory material as it is discovered prior to any conceptual determination. Now it is Kant's consistently held view that the matter of sensibility is always an effect of the external reality's action upon the cognitive powers of the self. And thus the indeterminate perception, although found among the self's own mental states, stems from the self's dependence upon affections and actions of an independent world. The two main elements of Kant's solution, then, are as follows. To the extent that the pure self's existence is bound up with the existence of an external world, the self cannot be said to operate independently of being given some sensory matter — for it is only the matter of sensibility which originates in the affections of the self by external reality. In Kant's vocabulary, the matter of sensibility is given in perception.

Hence the pure self's existence is bound up with a *perception*. But — second — since the reality of the external world must be discovered by the self independently of the categories, the perception at issue can only be an *indeterminate* one. The expression “indeterminate perception,” says Kant, “. . . signifies only something real that is given, given indeed to thought in general, and so not as appearance, nor as thing in itself (*noumenon*), but as something which actually exists. . .”<sup>31</sup> Let us pay a closer attention to this statement. First of all, Kant is laying a great deal of emphasis upon the “reality” and the “actual existence” of whatever it is that he refers to by the phrase “indeterminate perception.” One point, then, would have to be accommodated by all possible interpretations of this passage: above anything else, Kant wants to convey the thought that pure apperception points out beyond itself, towards something that is independent of its mental states and activities. But, second, this “something which actually exists” is here grasped as neither an appearance nor a noumenon. In effect, the knowledge of noumena would demand, in the subject, the capacity to *produce* its manifold, not just to *receive* it. But the forms of judgment — and hence also the categories — regulate the thought of a *finite* subject only. A subject capable of knowing noumena would not use the rules of our thought even in their strictly *logical* employment. The very terms “unity,” “substance,” “existence,” “cause,” etc., would have no place in the vocabulary of such a subject. At the same time, the “indeterminate perception” cannot simply designate the way in which the pure self grasps the world of appearances. For this would already imply the presence and the use of the (*schematized*) categories while the indeterminate perception must be given without any reliance upon them.

In the light of all this, it is perhaps no accident that in the *Prolegomena* Kant chooses to talk about the self's “feeling” of its own existence. For to talk about “feeling” is to talk about a mode of cognition which is prior to the emergence of sharp boundary lines between the self and the objective world of experience. In the indeterminate perception the self discovers, to be sure, a sensory material referring to an independent reality, but an *indeterminate* perception must, by definition, escape the self's capacity to discriminate sharply between its own experiences and the realm of external objects. The word “feeling” itself suggests a state of a pre-objective unity of the self with its environment; a state, where the self has not yet disentangled itself from the immediate ties with its surroundings. It will be the aim of Hegel to describe such pre-objective stages of mind in his *Anthropology*.

But Kant is in no position to fall back upon the kind of solution we have just described. The problem we have encountered in Chapter I reappears. For how is it possible for pure apperception — defined as a purely *intellectual* self — to have a *felt experience* of itself and of reality outside it? It is indeed a “desperate solution”<sup>32</sup> that Kant is offering us at this point!

It seems as if we have reached the end of our inquiry. The dilemma of “subjective” idealism is clear: after having split human experience into its “con-

structed" and "given" elements in order to save the independence of reality from our conceptual scheme, the idealist is obliged to suppress this difference by the very logic of his own system. It turns out that the "given," the "indeterminate" matter of experience, is either a meaningless fiction, or else, if it appears *at all* within the system of experience, it is already formed, articulated and — hence — absorbed by the conceptual scheme. For if — conversely — the idealist chooses to reassert the role of the "given," he is advancing a view which will immediately clash with his own emphasis upon the necessarily *conceptual* character of human cognitions. In effect, to say that the "given" is *felt* and not *known* and yet to claim that something that could not be known would be "nothing" to us, is to hold an eminently incoherent view. The tension between the *Aesthetic* on the one hand and the *Analytic* on the other reflects a contradictory nature of Kant's philosophical enterprise. This is why the *Critique* could have appealed to thinkers with diametrically opposite philosophical orientations. Depending on whether we concentrate on the intuitive or on the intellectual components of knowledge we will put a greater emphasis on either the *Aesthetic* or the *Analytic*. Kant's intention, of course, was to strike a balance between these two aspects of his system. He has tried to have it both ways: to stress the need for a conceptual articulation of our cognitions and, at the same time, for the limitation of the conceptual scheme by the boundary conditions of the "given." Knowledge was to be found in that dialogue between the sensible stimuli and the active constructs, between passivity and activity. The presence of the conceptual component was necessary, for without it intuitions would be "blind"; the presence of intuitions was equally necessary, for without intuitions our concepts would be "empty." It was Kant's hope that a proper balance could be struck between these two requirements. But if our analysis of Kant's moves was correct such a balance cannot be achieved within the framework of the *Critique*. And thus the contradictory positions of philosophers claiming the Kantian heritage must be seen as expression of a contradiction in Kant's own doctrine.

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At first glance it would seem that the "absolute" idealism of Hegel is free of the kind of difficulties we have found in Kant. In effect, according to Hegel's often repeated claim, the categories are not *just* abstract determinations of thought; they are also necessarily *embodied* in natural and social reality. Hegel may talk, metaphorically, about the logical idea "freely releasing itself"<sup>33</sup> into reality, but this metaphor should not hide the real content of Hegel's position. We are faced here, not with a caprice of the idea, but with a rational *necessity*: the idea

*cannot* be treated as an entity or even a form independent of its embodiments. When Hegel studies, in the *Science of Logic*, the categories of pure thinking, these categories are *eo ipso* categories of being.

However, even if we grant Hegel that he can make a strong case for his view within the *ontological* perspective, it is by no means clear that he is also in a position to avoid the pitfalls of the idealistic *epistemology*. And yet — according to Hegel himself — these two aspects of philosophical inquiry can in no way be separated. For to affirm the existence of some sort of reality (in this case: nature and history as the embodiment of categories) and yet to assert that we cannot *know* that reality, would be to violate the conditions under which the words “reality” and “knowledge” can be said to have any meaning whatsoever.<sup>34</sup> This emphasis that reality must be *knowable* and that knowledge can only mean cognition of things as they *really* are is the basic motive underlying Hegel’s criticism of the Kantian *Ding-an-sich*. Indeed, Hegel’s argument against the idea of the thing in itself is as follows: 1) if we assert that the concept of the *Ding-an-sich* is a purely “negative” one — if, in other words, that conception does not have any definite function in our knowledge and vocabulary — then we should abandon any use of it, for it means *nothing* to us; 2) if — conversely — we want to ascribe, as Kant sometimes does, some properties and functions to things in themselves, then we end up by considering them as just another construct of our own conceptual scheme. Thus, for example, when Kant talks about the “. . . nonsensible cause of [. . .] representations, which is completely unknown to us”<sup>35</sup> and which, nevertheless, “. . . determines [. . .] what I shall meet with . . .”<sup>36</sup> in the progression of my empirical knowledge,<sup>37</sup> he *is* attributing to the thing in itself some very definite functions and properties. Thus the thing in itself is said to *cause* our representations; furthermore, as it is a source of *many* properties it must contain in itself some diversity and manifoldness, etc. But in attributing these properties and functions to the thing in itself we are making some non-trivial judgments, which are *not* just contingent judgments of experience; in fact, in this reading of Kant, the truth of the former has to be assumed if we are to account for the possibility of any experience whatsoever. But to know certain non-trivial necessary propositions as conditions of all experience is possible if and only if the “objects,” to which these propositions refer are *not* things as they really are, but constructions of human cognition. Thus the conception of the thing in itself turns out to be just another *rule*, used by our reason for the purposes of constructing a unified and coherent system of knowledge. This, of course, is not Hegel’s own position; rather, it is the Hegelian *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole notion of *Ding-an-sich*. Still, the epistemology of objective idealism grows almost entirely out of the criticism of the “thing-in-itself.” In effect, if the Kantian view that reality is unknown defeats itself, then we cannot talk about reality which would be inaccessible to our knowledge. Thus — to take up the thread of our argument again — if Hegel wants to claim that the categories of pure thought are necessarily embodied in reality, he must also show that it is possible for us to *know* reality so defined.



The question of the possibility of knowledge of things as they really are is *not*, for Hegel, the same question that was asked by Kant. We do not have to focus on the “instrument” of knowledge in order to discover — through the philosophical criticism — its limitations and its scope. Through several arguments — which we cannot develop here — Hegel attempts to show that the philosophical “criticism” of knowledge is either a self-defeating exercise (in criticizing knowledge, we assume the validity of our criticism and *its* presuppositions) or an outright commitment to skepticism (once we assume that knowledge is an “instrument” external to reality, we can never reconstruct the notion of an objectively valid cognition). Thus the epistemological problem is, for Hegel, radically different from its modern, “critical” version. For instead of suspending our natural cognitions and beliefs, we have to “trust” them and to let them examine their presuppositions *by their own standards*. It is in the process of that self-examination that natural consciousness will work its way up to the standpoint of absolute knowledge. And the notion of absolute knowledge represents Hegel’s answer to the epistemological question. For it is from the point of view of absolute knowledge that we can not only assert that things as they really are represent a totality ordered by the categories of thinking, but that we can also *know* reality as described in that way.

Now, to say that we know reality as an embodiment of categories means two things: 1) that we know it as conforming to the *categories* (i.e., to the universal conceptual scheme studied in the *Science of Logic*) and 2) that we know it *as reality* (i.e., as distinct from the universal conceptual scheme).

Knowledge is aware not only of itself, but also of the negative of itself, or its limit. Knowing its limit means knowing how to sacrifice itself. This sacrifice is the self-abandonment, in which Spirit sets forth, in the form of free fortuitous happening, its process of becoming Spirit, intuitively apprehending outside its pure Self as Time, and likewise its existence as Space.<sup>38</sup>

In this passage Hegel is saying that (absolute) knowledge is not enclosed in its own conceptual scheme; knowledge is knowledge *of reality*. True, in order to be intelligible and understandable reality must conform to the rules of knowledge. But the converse is true too: in order to be knowledge *of* something, the absolute knowledge must confront a reality, which is at least in some sense different from the conceptual scheme itself. If all features of reality could be absorbed in knowledge, the absolute knower would be living in a kingdom of unreal shadows, not in a genuine cognitive relation to *reality*. Thus, the conceptual scheme implies its “other,” its “limit” and Hegel is telling us that this “other” of knowledge is to be found in the world of space and time.

Hegel expands on this idea in countless passages. Nature and history are the “other” of pure thinking, because *in them* reason exists in that “externalized” and “exclusive” form of *Aussereinandersein* in which it falls short of the perfect order and coherence of purely logical essences. “The world of sense is a scene of mutual exclusion: its being is outside itself. This is the fundamental feature of the sensible. [. . .] the sensible is only in so far as it is not the other, and only in so far as that other is. But thought, or the «Ego», occupies a position the very

reverse of the sensible, with its mutual exclusions, and its being outside itself."<sup>39</sup> This means, first of all, that in (spatio-temporal) *reality*, the appearance of one thing is paid for by the disappearance of another; there is no room here for that harmonious development of thinking where an earlier and more abstract concept is preserved in a richer and more developed category. It is thinking alone which can be so unifying and "cumulative";<sup>40</sup> in the realm of space and time, the assertion of one trend or tendency *destroys* the preceding stage.

There is still more to be said about the difference between (natural and social) reality and the pure *Logos*. When "externalized" into nature and history the logical idea becomes "dispersed" and "distorted": neither the natural divisions of species, nor even the pattern of historical progress, meets all the requirements of rationality. We can find plenty of room for chance, contingency, setbacks, etc. This is easy to see in the case of nature, which is ". . . weak and fails to exhibit the logical forms in their purity,"<sup>41</sup> so that nature ". . . affords us only the spectacle of a contingency losing itself in vagueness."<sup>42</sup> Hegel has nothing but scorn for those who wonder at the "richness and variety" of nature's structure, forgetting that its diversity is due to the action of blind circumstance and chance. But history, too, does not represent a sequence of events from which chance and contingency could be eliminated.<sup>43</sup> The historical progress — the embodiment of idea in changing forms of state — frames its way through all sorts of zig-zags, setbacks, convulsions, etc.

This world of "externality" and "chance" is the world of the senses. In *philosophy*, Hegel insists, we cannot be satisfied with the definition of sensing in terms of the *organs* used by the knower in order to produce sensations. This definition — which may very well satisfy common sense and science — does not illuminate us on the crucial issue that is at stake here: What is the *mode of cognition* that is proper to a mere sensory awareness. Neither a detailed description of sense data nor an explanation of them in terms of the physiology of sight, touch, etc. will tell us anything about the epistemic function of sensing and its proper place in the system of human knowledge. "The real distinction between sense and thought lies in this — that the essential feature of the sensible is individuality [. . .] sensible existence presents a number of mutually exclusive units — units, to speak in more definite and abstract formulae, which exist side by side with, and after, one another."<sup>44</sup> In this definition, sensibility is comprehended through contrast with and in abstraction from the higher forms of human cognition. If we *could* produce such purely "sensing" cognition then indeed we would know *nothing more* than externality and chance. But — as Hegel's arguments in "Sense-certainty" amply demonstrate — such pure sensing cannot count as a piece of *knowledge*. For from the moment that we attempt to *say what we mean* — and without language there is no knowledge — we are subsuming pure intuition under (increasingly richer) rules and concepts of thinking. When, finally, we arrive at the stage of Absolute Knowledge, spirit ". . . supersedes its time character, (conceptually)

comprehends intuition, and is intuition comprehended and comprehending."<sup>45</sup>

But this statement — and the solution, which it is meant to offer to the problem of knowledge — raises inevitably the following question. Considering things from the vantage point of the absolute knower, do we still have some means of distinguishing between intuition “comprehended and comprehending” and intuition *as intuition*? In other words, by what criteria — if any — can we still tell the difference between reality *as thought of* and reality *as real*? As we have pointed out before, Hegel does and must hold these *two* following views: 1) reality is structured in agreement with the categories of pure thinking, 2) reality is also distinct from the conceptual scheme. Let us emphasize it once more: knowledge must be knowledge *of reality* (which is therefore different from knowledge itself) and, at the same time, reality could not be *knowable* unless it were ordered in conformity with the rules of reason. Without being embodied in its “other,” the Idea would not be *real*; but without considering this “other” as embodiment of the (rational) *Idea* (hence as something, which can be comprehended and understood), we could not be in a position to *know* it.

It is Marx's contention that Hegel cannot have it both ways. For a subject considering reality from the standpoint of absolute *knowledge*, there simply is no way of understanding reality as distinct and independent of our concepts. Again, the old alternative of idealism reappears. If reality can be made an object of discourse and knowledge — then it becomes at once absorbed by our conceptual scheme. If not, then the “externality” of nature and history — i.e., that feature of the world which makes up the whole difference between reality and thought — can only be given in a blind pre-verbal intuition, which could not even sustain itself as a form of *knowledge*. Thus, in emphasizing the claims of human *spontaneity*, we are making it impossible for the absolute knower to relate his cognitions to an independent reality. But if we chose to give greater weight to the claims of *receptivity* (pure sensing, intuiting, etc.) we would end up by attributing to the absolute knower such modes of cognition as are irreconcilable with the requirements of a true and genuine human *knowledge*. Thus — to quote Marx — from the standpoint of absolute knowledge, “*Nature as nature*, i.e., so far as it is sensuously distinguished from that secret sense concealed within, nature separated and distinguished from these abstractions is *nothing* (a nullity demonstrating its nullity), is *devoid of sense*, or has only the sense of an external thing which has been superseded.”<sup>46</sup>

In defending Hegel against Marx's criticism one could adopt one of these two available options:

1) One could insist, first, that the *conceptual scheme itself* provides the knower with the possibility of understanding reality as *distinct* from pure thinking. We could find, perhaps, some concepts and rules in terms of which it could be possible to comprehend the empirical world in all its distinctness from the realm of logical essences.

2) Another option open to us would be to hold, not so much that the absolute knower can understand reality (as contrasted with pure essences) through his *conceptual* scheme, but that being a *human* knower he is also a passive and embodied creature and — therefore — has a *felt*, immediate experience of his material environment.

In taking the first option, we would be attempting to show that pure *thought* can indeed go beyond itself and comprehend its “other”; in pursuing the second line, we would be claiming that the absolute knower can have a *sense* of independent reality around him.

We shall now consider these two possible replies in more detail.

Ad. 1. When Hegel claims that knowledge “knows” not only the shadowy realm of concepts and essences, but its (natural and social) “other” as well — i.e., reality in all its “exclusivity” and “externality” — he does not just leave the matter on the level of such a general claim, but points out a specific *category* in terms of which even the absolute knower can always identify and grasp reality as different from his conceptual scheme. This category is the category of *contingency*. “Although contingency [. . .] is only one aspect in the whole of actuality itself, it has no less than the rest of the forms of the idea its due office in the world of objects.”<sup>47</sup>

We cannot discuss here in detail Hegel’s treatment of modal categories, but we must note immediately at least two things: (a) contingency is said to be an aspect of reality (of the “world of objects”), but (b) Hegel also points out that that aspect belongs to the class of “the rest of the forms of the idea.”<sup>48</sup> In other words, those features of reality which we can identify as contingent are not just given in the sense of not having *their* conceptual counterpart in our conceptual scheme. In effect, if the absolute knower *can* understand and identify events and trends which deviate from the standards set down by the pure essences it is precisely because he has at his disposal an appropriate *category*: that of contingency. Now contingency, chance, etc., are what distinguish the idea in its purely *logical* form (as studied in the *Science of Logic*) from that very same idea in its embodiments. Thus the absolute knower *can* understand the embodied form of the idea to the extent that the form of embodiment *can* be grasped and articulated through the category of contingency, which is an essential rule of our thinking. We do not have to abandon the logical tools of our thought in order to understand reality as distinct from the former; it is our own conceptual scheme which will provide us with a rule suited for that purpose.

But this reply will not do. Precisely because “contingency” is a category, an element of our conceptual scheme, it will fail to convey the sense of reality as distinct from concepts. It is one thing to say that not all bits and pieces of our cognition fit the standards established in the realm of essences. It is another thing to claim that these bits and pieces can lead us beyond the conceptual scheme, towards empirical reality.

It is Hegel himself who provides us with examples which immediately invalidate all his claims about that special role of the category of contingency. In

effect, Hegel tells us that such things as, for example, "law and legal provision" do *not* exist in space and time and yet *they too* stand in relation of isolation, chance, etc.<sup>49</sup> Now the reason why Hegel refuses to ascribe spatio-temporal predicates to, as he puts it, the *content* (not the *origin*) of a particular law is clear. It is undeniable that a legal provision was born at a certain time in the minds of a certain group of people. However, once formulated, the meaning of such a law becomes independent of that particular set of spatial and temporal circumstances that gave birth to it. The law acquires a certain "eternity": it can be recognized and identified by future generations; its meaning is not dependent upon the occurrence of (temporal) psychological processes in the minds of individuals who read about and study that law, or upon the existence of the books where it was first written. The content of the law remains what it is — an ideal meaning — in spite of and throughout the changes in real time and space. Now if "contingency" and "isolation" can characterize even such ideal cultural contents, then there is a world of difference between contingency as embodied in *real space and time* and in the realm of ideal meanings. Briefly, in order to understand contingency as a feature of *reality*, we must have at our disposal a lot more than just the *category* of contingency. For, from the standpoint of the pure category *alone*, there is *no* difference between contingency in ideal meanings and contingency as aspect of the real world. In order to tell the difference between contingency as *thought of* and contingency as *real*, we need to introduce certain criteria which cannot be found in the category of contingency alone. The meaning of reality eludes the category of contingency precisely to the extent to which the latter is only that, i.e., a *category*. Thus if we are to be in a position to understand and identify reality as different from the pure essences, we need some modes of cognition which would be irreducible to the spontaneity of thinking. And this leads us to the second possible way of defending Hegel against the sort of objection that Marx was advancing.

Ad. 2. This line of argument has been explored with great force and clarity by G.R.G. Mure.<sup>50</sup> Mure concedes, that in order to know nature as independent of his concepts, the absolute knower must have some mode of cognition which is essentially irreducible to pure thinking. And such a mode of cognition is always available to us, because we are ourselves *parts of nature*; hence we have a felt experience of our *body* and as our body is in continuous interchange with nature we have a *felt experience of nature* as well. To search for a *conceptual* way of understanding nature as distinct from concepts would be a contradiction in terms. But, as an embodied, sentient being, the absolute knower has an immediate sense of Nature as condition of *his own* natural existence. Can this solution be acceptable to us?

It is in his "Anthropology" that Hegel concerns himself with the bodily background of human consciousness. In the *Anthropology* our mental contents — feelings, intentions, thoughts, etc., — are considered as inseparable from the living body and dependent upon *its* states. Our body, in turn, is tuned to nature around us; consequently, our moods and feelings change de-

pending upon the changes in climate, seasons, geographical conditions, etc. Insofar as the human mind is thus considered as embodied in a living organism, we call it "soul" (*Seele*).

Everything changes when we pass from the stage of "soul" to the stage of "consciousness" (*Bewusstsein*). The soul does not yet have the power of objectifying itself: here, man feels himself in immediate unity with his body and with his natural environment. But with the emergence of consciousness, our own corporeity — considered both as an element of the objective space *and* the locus of our feelings and moods — becomes an *object* for us. Thus, consciousness means a *break* with the immediacy of feeling and embodiment; man can only become a truly self-conscious "I" through the negation of and detachment from his own corporeity. Thus Hegel talks about ". . . the I as the self-related, individually determined universal, a self-existent, abstract totality freed from corporeity"<sup>51</sup> and adds that it is "this seizure of the corporeity [which] forms the soul's liberation, its attaining objective consciousness."<sup>52</sup>

*The Phenomenology of Mind* begins with the emergence of such a self-objectified "I": "In Phenomenology, the soul, by the negation of its corporeity, raises itself to purely ideal self-identity, becomes consciousness, becomes 'I . . .'"<sup>53</sup> And this is why in the "Introduction" to the *Phenomenology of Mind* Hegel describes consciousness as "its own notion" — a form of mind which can assess, uproot and destroy all of its natural beliefs and feelings. This, too, is the reason why the self-validation of the Ego through the struggle for recognition will require a total break with immediate feelings and inclinations, and ". . . this immediacy is at the same time the corporeity of self-consciousness . . ."<sup>54</sup> This does not mean, of course, that human mind moves through the stages of the *Phenomenology* without having any notion of feelings, desires, moods, etc.; quite the contrary, most of Hegel's analyses are devised to find the proper relation of mind to its — surpassed — bodily background. But — as has been pointed out<sup>55</sup> — that background (our sensations, feelings, moods, etc.) appears to the subject of the *Phenomenology* only through the prism of his own forms and conceptions. For example, even at the stage of sense-certainty, consciousness cannot be said simply to *be* its feelings and sensations; rather, it *interprets* itself as such pure immediacy in a conception of knowledge which breaks down no sooner than it is formulated.<sup>56</sup> Sense-certainty may *claim* that it is nothing but pure feeling and sensing, but this claim is immediately invalidated by sense-certainty's own standards.

To be sure, the absolute knower "remembers" the surpassed stages of his knowledge. But that famous "*Erinnerung*" does not extend beyond the stages retraced in the *Phenomenology of Mind*; it is only the forms of *phenomenological* experience that are preserved and totalized in absolute knowledge.<sup>57</sup> Now, in order for the absolute knower to preserve the *sense* of his embodiment, he would have to "remember" the (anthropological) stages where mind senses itself as located in a living body. But Hegel is clear in insisting that the emergence of consciousness means the destruction of the subject's *sense* of embodiment.

And so it seems that we are brought back to our first option. In order to demonstrate that the absolute knower is cognizant of independent reality, we would have to show how this is possible not in terms of an immediate *feeling*, but in terms of the *conceptual scheme* itself. But this — we have seen it earlier — will not work within the Hegelian perspective. For if the *true* knowledge of reality is achieved at that final stage where intuition becomes “comprehended and comprehending,” then the knower has no way indeed of grasping intuition *as intuition*. The category of contingency, to which Hegel appeals in that connection, is but another category; hence, with *its* aid alone we are in no position to know reality as different from and not (completely) conforming to our conceptual scheme.

What transpires from this brief discussion of Hegel is the same weakness of idealism we have already discovered in Kant. On the one hand, it is impossible to ascribe feeling and sensing to a self defined from the very beginning as pure consciousness. But, on the other hand, such ascription is required by the very task of accounting for the self's relation to an independent *reality*. Once again, then, the thinking self, the “pure Ego” of Hegel, would have to be conceived as identical with the feeling and sensing self. Far from emerging as — to use Hegel's expression — “freed from corporeity,” the pure Ego must be seen as firmly rooted in the human body, with all its needs, drives and impulses. We shall return to this subject in Chapter IV, where we shall attempt to demonstrate how the philosophical anthropology of Marx can prove quite fruitful when one is dealing with the difficulties we have been wrestling with all along. And, in that context, we shall also return to Hegel: we shall reinforce our main point by confronting Marxian and Hegelian treatments of two specific problems — of alienation and of labor — intimately connected with the general issue of concepts vs. reality.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER II

- <sup>1</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 104.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, A 105.
- <sup>3</sup> Norman Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, New York 1962, pp. 95-96.
- <sup>4</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 99.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, B 114.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, A 99-A 100.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, A 102.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, A 32, B 47.
- <sup>9</sup> *Reflexion* 4673. In: *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin und Leipzig, 1928, Bd. XVII, pp. 636-637.
- <sup>10</sup> "Consciousness of the synthetic unity of the manifold [and] homogeneous in intuition in general, in so far as the representation of an object first becomes possible by means of it is, however, the concept of a magnitude (*quantum*). Thus even the perception of an object, as appearance, is only possible through the same synthetic unity of the manifold of the given sensible intuition as that whereby the unity of the combination of the manifold [and] homogeneous is thought in the concept of a *magnitude*." *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 162.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, B xxxvii.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, B 154-B 155.
- <sup>13</sup> Alois Riehl, *Der Philosophische Kritizismus*, Leipzig 1924, Bd. 2., pp. 148-149.
- <sup>14</sup> Hans Vaihinger, *Commentar zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Bd. 2, p. 157.
- <sup>15</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 153-B 156.
- <sup>16</sup> For more detail see: T.D. Weldon, *Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason"*, Oxford 1958, Part III, Ch. III.
- <sup>17</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 145.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, B 291.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, A 411, B 438.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, A 183, B 226.
- <sup>21</sup> *Reflexion* 6359, op. cit.
- <sup>22</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 119.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, A 120.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, B 274.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, B xl-B xli.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, A 373.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, B xl-B xli.
- <sup>28</sup> It is not our purpose to analyze here whether this argument is sound or not. However, let us mention one obvious difficulty. Kant claims that I can be aware of my empirical existence as a temporal entity distinct from my representations of it. But Kant is also committed to the view that the only domain where such (empirically) independent entities can be found is the domain of *spatial* objects. This idea supports the entire edifice of the *Analogies* and Kant accepts it as a more or less self-evident assumption. But it is then difficult to see how this claim can be reconciled with the claim put forward as the very point of departure of the *Refutation of Idealism*. For either my empirical self can indeed be grasped as an entity distinct from my representations of it even when I consider it — as Kant does in the *Refutation* — as a merely *temporal* item; but then it cannot be the case that the only entities independent of my representations can be of a spatial character and the proof does not produce what it is purported to produce. Or else the only reason I can attribute reality to my empirical self is that self's *spatial* quality — i.e., its being a *person*, an *embodied* self — but then the proof is unnecessary, since we are dealing from the very beginning with a self which can only be thought of as set within a world of spatial objects.
- <sup>29</sup> "If, with the intellectual consciousness of my existence, in the representation 'I am' which accompanies all my judgments and acts of understanding, I could at the same time connect a determination of my existence through intellectual intuition, the consciousness of a relation to something outside me would not be required." *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xl.
- <sup>30</sup> See, for example, André de Muralt, *La conscience transcendente dans le criticisme kantien*, Paris 1958, pp. 117-118.
- <sup>31</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 423.
- <sup>32</sup> H.J. de Vleeschauwer, op. cit., p. 581.



<sup>33</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Miller transl., London 1969, p. 843.

<sup>34</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie transl., London 1969, p. 133.

<sup>35</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 494.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, A 496.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 806-807.

<sup>39</sup> *Hegel's Logic. (Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences)* Wallace transl., Oxford 1975, p. 69.

<sup>40</sup> Eugène Fleischmann, *La science universelle ou la logique de Hegel*, Paris 1968, p. 33.

<sup>41</sup> *Encyclopedia I*, p. 40.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>43</sup> "... here chance and specialty have received authority from the Idea, to exercise their monstrous power." (G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, New York 1956, p. 36.) "... in their *essence* these [states of society-P.H.] are infinite and eternal; but [...] the forms they assume may be of a limited order, and consequently belong to the domain of mere nature, and be subject to the sway of chance." (*Ibid.*, p. 37.) See, too, *Encyclopedia I*, p. 206.

<sup>44</sup> *Encyclopedia I*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>45</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 800.

<sup>46</sup> Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, Bottomore transl. New York. Toronto, London, p. 218. Louis Dupré (*The Philosophical Foundations of Marxism*, p. 94) considers this criticism misleading: "Marx criticizes Hegel for reducing reality to a merely logical, *nonreal* Idea. Marx identifies consciousness with "ideal" and assumes that both are irreducibly opposed to the real. For Hegel, however, reality *is* the Idea and the Idea is more than consciousness. Marx is criticizing his own interpretation of Hegel rather than Hegel himself . . ." What is misleading is Dupré's — not Marx's — bizarre reading of Hegel. For Hegel reality is most emphatically *not* the Idea, but the Idea in its "externalized" and "exclusive" form.

<sup>47</sup> *Encyclopedia I*, 206.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* See, too, *Science of Logic*, p. 550.

<sup>49</sup> *Encyclopedia I*, p. 30.

<sup>50</sup> G.R.G. Mure, *An Introduction to Hegel*, Oxford 1940, pp. 68-69.

<sup>51</sup> *Encyclopedia III*, p. 152.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>55</sup> "In der «Phänomenologie des Geistes» [...] Insofern die Leiblichkeit von der Seele durchdrungen und aufgehoben worden ist, *ist sie zu einem Moment des Ich als Selbstbewusstsein geworden* [my italics-P.H.] insofern sie «organisch» bleibt und der Seele Widerstand leistet, wird sie als Körper zum Objekte entäussert und damit Inhalt des Bewusstseins. Im Gegensatz zur Sphäre der Anthropologie tritt die Leiblichkeit hier daher nicht unmittelbar, sondern nur indirect als Moment eines Verhältnisses in Erscheinung . . ." Jan van der Meulen, *Hegels Lehre von Leib, Seele und Geist*, in *Hegel-Studien*, Bd 2., pp. 267-268.

<sup>56</sup> For more detail see: Jean Hyppolite, *Logique et existence*, Paris, P.U.F. 1961, Ch. I.

<sup>57</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 807-808.

## CHAPTER III

## IDEALS AND INTERESTS

The idealist, we have seen, seems to be committed to two irreconcilable views: man is *both* an embodied, "receptive" creature and a "rational" spontaneous subject. Thus — to return for a moment to our second chapter — human knowledge requires the element of sensation or intuition as well as a concept, a rule by means of which those intuitions are structured and combined.

The idealistic conception of human action is very similar — and so, too, are its contradictions. The idealist will begin by insisting that man is *not* a "holy will," free of the influence of natural needs and interests. Man is a "receptive" or "affected" agent. Thus needs and interests *do* count as factors shaping human actions and commitments. Consequently, any conception of human agency which would not acknowledge the role of our natural interests and needs would cease to be a conception of *human* agency. But this is only part of the story. For, from the idealistic point of view, man is also a "spontaneous," an "intelligible" being. This means that the activity of a human agent is or at least ought to be shaped not just by the pressure of needs and interests, but by the agent's commitment to moral principles. In other words, to talk about human agency which could be made completely intelligible in terms of some causal mechanism of nature would be to destroy the very idea of a specifically human action.

The contradictions in the idealistic view of action and evaluation stem from the same source as the difficulties inherent in the idealistic theory of knowledge. Just as it was impossible to understand — within the idealistic perspective — how the pure detached knower performing his conceptual syntheses and identifications would ever become a sentient, intuiting being, so, too, the conception of man as an "intelligible" agent and evaluator will exclude any possibility of conceiving his needs and interests as real springs of his action. Conversely, any attempt to construe such an agent as being *genuinely* influenced by his needs and interests will turn out to be incompatible with the standards, which determine what it means to be an intelligible agent. And let us repeat once more what is the cause of these difficulties, for they all stem from one and the same source. It is the very basic assumption of idealism that is at stake here: the conception of knowledge and evaluation as autonomous and disinterested activities, not as part and parcel of man's effort to deal with his natural needs and drives. Once this assumption is made, there seems to be no way of escaping the conceptual tension that permeates the idealistic accounts of

human (cognitive and practical) activities. The idealist will insist that human subjects are both passive and active, but the original view of our (cognitive and practical) spontaneity as disinterested activity of the pure Ego will make it impossible to conceive those two aspects of man as features of *one and the same* knower and agent. It is only when we begin to consider knowledge and evaluation from a consistently naturalistic point of view that we can hope to escape the difficulties and contradictions of idealism. But before drawing this conclusion, we must first take a closer look at the idealistic theory of man as a subject of *practical* activities.

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In Book II of the *Transcendental Dialectic* Kant attempts to prove that human freedom is "at least *not incompatible with* nature."<sup>1</sup> The proof relies upon the distinction between two conceptions of human agency. Man is, on the one hand, part of the empirical world, subject to the causal laws which govern it. On the other hand, human beings belong to the intelligible world and, in that capacity, are in a position to open spontaneously an empirical causal sequence. Insofar as we consider man as part of the empirical reality he is said to have an *empirical character*, i.e., a set of habits, propensities and dispositions to act thanks to which an individual behaves in a causally predictable way under a specific set of circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Thus — to take Kant's example — voluntary actions of an individual spreading some malicious and damaging lie can easily be explained in terms of that person's "defective education," "bad company," "viciousness of a natural disposition insensitive to shame," etc.<sup>3</sup> The demonstration of the objective validity of the causal rule with respect to human actions considered as parts of the phenomenal world would be no different than the general justification of causality offered in the *Second Analogy of Experience*: since human actions and reactions are ordered in a *temporal* sequence and since our *knowledge* of succession requires the rule of causality, we would have to assume that human behavior too is governed by causal laws. Thus, for example, my cry "ouch" not only "appears," but can be *known* to succeed the sensation of an intense pain only because there is an empirical causal law by virtue of which a person devoid of a strong resistance to pain will (predictably) react to that initial sensation with a loud complaint.

Man can also be considered as a member of the *intelligible* world. Since a human agent ". . . knows himself also through pure apperception [. . .] he is thus to himself, on the one hand phenomenon and on the other hand, in respect of certain faculties the action of which cannot be ascribed to the receptivity of sensibility, a purely intelligible object."<sup>4</sup> The identity of the agent

insofar as he belongs to the supersensible world is said to be based on his *intelligible character* — and since man, in his intelligible character, does not belong to the world of sensible experience, the conditions of possibility of that kind of experience do not determine the mode of action originating in the intelligible self. Hence man does not have to be subjected to the rule of causality and — hypothetically at least, or as Kant says, “problematically” — he *could* have an ability to open spontaneously (freely) an empirical causal chain. But how can we consider *the same* agent as both causally determined and free? Kant will argue that it is not incompatible to apply to *the same actions* two different vocabularies and modes of explanation. For even though the agent is in the grip of causal determinisms when his actions are considered as flowing from his *empirical* character, it is also possible to consider *the same actions* as manifestations of the *intelligible* character. This is so because the empirical character *itself* can be considered as resulting from an intelligible, supersensible choice of the agent: “This empirical character is itself determined in the intelligible character”<sup>5</sup>; “. . . a different intelligible character would have given a different empirical character.”<sup>6</sup> In another passage Kant compares the empirical character to the “sensible schema” of the intelligible character — an analogy, somewhat misleading perhaps, with the schematism of pure concepts of understanding (in contradistinction to the categories, the idea of the intelligible character cannot be shown to have objective validity for our *knowledge* of phenomena) — and concludes that “. . . every action, irrespective of its relation in time to other appearances is the immediate effect of the intelligible character of pure reason. Reason therefore acts freely. . . .”<sup>7</sup> The person who told the malicious lie did what was understandable and predictable in terms of his dispositions and habits. And yet, his habits and dispositions could and *ought* to have been different; this basic assumption of our moral vocabulary is not incompatible with the conditions of our empirical knowledge of human actions *precisely because* the empirical character *can* be interpreted as a phenomenal manifestation of the intelligible self, free of the tyranny of causal mechanisms.

Now, insofar as man is free when considered in his intelligible character and insofar as freedom is, among other things, “. . . the will’s independence of coercion through sensuous impulses,”<sup>8</sup> everything that has been said about the relation between the intelligible character and the empirical character can be construed as a description of the contrast between the former and our sensuous interests, needs and inclinations. Kant makes this move clearly and explicitly: “In its intelligible character [. . .] this same subject must be considered to be free from all influence of sensibility . . .”<sup>9</sup> Thus the pressures of his natural interests determine man only as an *empirical* character: it was predictable that X would tell that malicious lie only to the extent that we were considering him, not as a supersensible being originating a causal chain by his spontaneity, but as an empirical agent with “a natural disposition insensitive to shame.”

This last point is important, for it allows us to see that the treatment of

freedom in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (i.e., in terms of the difference between the intelligible and the empirical character) is simply another, perhaps more sophisticated, way of expressing the relation between freedom and nature — the proper subject of the *Critique of Practical Reason* and of Kant's moral philosophy as a whole. Consequently, the conceptual tensions of Kant's moral philosophy are identical to the difficulties inherent in the "problematic" treatment of freedom in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. These difficulties and tensions I now propose to discuss.

In an important passage of the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant sums up his position in the following words: "The rational being counts himself, *qua* intelligence, as belonging to the intelligible world, and only as an efficient cause belonging to it does he call his causality a will. On the other side, however, he is conscious of himself as part of the world of sense in which his actions are found as mere appearances of that causality. [. . .] As a mere member of the intelligible world, all my actions would completely accord with the principle of the autonomy of the pure will, and as a part only of the world of sense would they have to be assumed to conform wholly to the natural law of desires and inclinations and thus to the heteronomy of nature."<sup>10</sup> This quotation reflects quite faithfully the view of human agency that Kant intended to convey to his readers. Even a very superficial reading of Kant's writings will leave the reader with a strong impression of the "dual" nature of human beings — the sensible and the intelligible. Nobody can fail to notice how Kant emphasizes, over and over again, that on account of our status as "intelligible" agents we can act in agreement with the rules of morality and how, on the other hand, our finite volition (necessarily affected by inclinations and impulses) can never meet the standards of a perfect moral performance.

But Kant's position is here highly ambiguous. In the passage we have just quoted Kant emphasizes two things: if I were a member of the intelligible world alone, I would not be subjected to the law of causality *at all*; if I am, it is because I am also a member of the sensible world, where I appear as endowed with and identifiable by my empirical character. However — as we have already seen — Kant also holds that the empirical character of the agent is a manifestation, a sensible appearance of that agent's *intelligible* character; the former is *derived* from the latter. And even though we cannot *know* our intelligible self, its relation to our empirical personality is clearly one of (unknown) reality to appearances. Thus, man's *true* identity is established by his intelligible character: ". . . it is only as intelligence that man is his *proper self*."<sup>11</sup> [my italics — P.H.] In other words, what man "really" is, comes down to his being the intelligible self, that pure spontaneity of freedom, which is totally independent of nature and the causal mechanisms that govern it; at best, we could grant Kant that *our* knowledge of human behavior must employ causal explanations. True, it is "exactly the same will" as Kant puts it, which is considered *first* as belonging to the intelligible world (and thus completely free) and *then* as empirical volition influenced by impulses and interests: we do

not have two distinct and separable entities, but only two different views of the same human volition. Still, the fact is that our view of it as spontaneous and independent from nature is more basic and more fundamental; for we continue to hold that the self as *empirical* is derivative from the same self considered as *intelligible*.

One would object, perhaps, that when we talk about the self as it “really” is, we are imputing to Kant some type of ontological commitment which is alien to the spirit of critical philosophy. Indeed, any ontological interpretation of the distinction between the intelligible and the sensuous aspect of human action would inevitably lead to still more problems and puzzles. Let us take one clear example: since the empirical character of a person may and does change, the intelligible choice that sustains it would have to change too; Kant told us that quite unequivocally. But *what kind* of change could we ascribe to the supersensible I? Clearly, it could not be a *temporal* one, for the intelligible subject is not part of the sensible world. Presumably, then, we would be compelled to claim that the changes in the intelligible self occurred in a *non-temporal* sequence. Thus we would have to talk about an order of occurrences which would be different from a purely *logical* sequence (for the intelligible subject is *real* in at least some sense of this word) and of which, nevertheless, no intuition could be produced. Moreover, if the idea of the intelligible character were to have — its incomprehensibility notwithstanding — some objective counterpart in reality, we would still have to abolish that reference by the very principles of Kant’s epistemology. Let us only take a better look at this issue. As no sensory evidence of the intelligible character could be produced, we would have to know *a priori* that the changes in the agent’s intelligible self would trigger off and correspond to the changes in the empirical character. Kant will insist, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, that we can never know the *nature* of that influence of the supersensible will upon the empirical self. Still, we would at least have to know that there *is* that “correspondence” between the spontaneous decisions of the pure self and the empirical actions of man; and we would still be facing the usual problem of accounting for the conditions of possibility of this (necessary and non-trivial) type of knowledge. The only answer which appears consistent with Kant’s epistemology would be to transform the “intelligible character” into a rule of human cognition, stripped of any alleged reference to things as they really are; a conclusion which brings us back to the very “epistemological” interpretation we were attempting to deny.

However, the point we are trying to make has nothing to do with the issues dividing the ontological and the epistemological interpretations. The weakness of the former and the strength of the latter seem undeniable at least in the case of the problem now under discussion. There seems to be no way of reconciling the ontological interpretation with Kant’s emphatically stated view that the conceptual incompatibility of the two conflicting vocabularies and modes of explanation (i.e., through “freedom” and through “nature”) referring to human action would perhaps be abolished in things-in-themselves, as it may

very well be the case that the subject of our intelligible activities could turn out to be identical (from the point of view of things as they really are) with the "noumenal" side of the *material* world.<sup>12</sup> However, the acceptance of the epistemological interpretation does not abolish *our* problem. Hegel once remarked<sup>13</sup> that it is a part of Kant's general strategy to remove contradictions from reality, only to ascribe them to our knowledge of it; a comment which is more than relevant in the case now at issue. For even if we accepted the epistemological interpretation, it would still be true that at least *within the system of our knowledge* — and without assuming any reference of it to an independent ontological order — the conception of spontaneity is more essential to the notion of human agency than the conception of receptivity: we would still need the former in order to account for the very presence of the latter. Its lack of objective reference notwithstanding, *our* conceptual scheme would imply that human agency must be thought of as pure spontaneity casting a pale shadow of the empirical character, vulnerable to the pressures of sensibility. Thus the description of man as a "free" agent and evaluator would enjoy an obvious priority in the order of our cognitions.

To sum up: passivity, according to Kant, is *essential* to any human agent — and yet, man as he "really" is (in his "proper self," to use Kant's phrase) turns out to be a purely active subject. This is the source of a basic contradiction in Kant's conception of human agency; we will soon see how Hegel brings this contradiction to its full articulation and attempts to overcome it in his own theory. But before we study Hegel's criticism of Kant we must first show in more detail how, in Kant, the conception of man as a totally spontaneous agent and evaluator turns out to be more essential than the conception of man as a being of need; we must show that we are dealing here with a permanent and all-pervasive feature of Kant's philosophical theory of action.

To begin with, then, if the empirical character is itself the result of the intelligible one, then the determination of the agent by his needs and interests can be articulated and accounted for only in the language of *phenomena*. Let us develop this point. As we have seen before, Kant states clearly that our inclinations, impulses and needs act upon the *empirical* subject. It is only insofar as my volition is considered in its empirical aspect that I can be said to be influenced by fear or hunger and it is only as an empirical self, endowed with certain propensities and dispositions to act that my behavior is the result of various pressures of my needs and natural interests. Thus if we want to refer to the agent not insofar as he *appears* (in time), but insofar as he *is*, we are allowed to hold ("problematically," to be sure) that "there is in man a power of self-determination, independent of any coercion through sensuous impulses."<sup>14</sup> In this sense — which cannot be grasped in the language of phenomena — man cannot be "acted upon" or "influenced" by *any* inclinations. It is not some "viciousness of the natural disposition" that influences my conduct as it *really* is; it is my "proper self" which decides to identify my action with that base impulse or propensity. My inclinations and interests do not appear as factors

determining my conduct; if they have a role in shaping my behavior, it is only because I have freely *allowed* them to have it. Interests *as* interests (inclinations *as* inclinations, impulses *as* impulses) are but a passive and unstructured matter of action — and it is strictly up to the intelligible I to form them in these two possible ways: either by accepting them as springs of its conduct or by neutralizing their pressures. “Reason, irrespective of all empirical conditions of the act, is completely free and the lie [Kant is referring to his former example — P.H.] is entirely due to its default.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, as soon as we abandon the world of appearances (be it through our moral experience or even through a “problematic” conception) any sign of human receptivity disappears. Pure spontaneity is locked in its own magic circle: nothing can appear as a spring of action without a free *fiat* of that spontaneity; to say that natural interests can really determine human conduct would be to strip the human agent of his (supersensible) power of self-determination.

When we now move to the (more restricted) domain of Kant’s moral philosophy, our attention is at once focused upon the following way of describing the two possible forms of human conduct: an agent can be said to act for the sake of independently valid *reasons*, or else his behavior may be considered as following from the action of some natural *causes*. Without this distinction Kant’s moral philosophy would collapse. Yet, in order to defend the validity of such distinction, Kant relies, clearly and explicitly, upon his analysis of the intelligible vs. the empirical character.<sup>16</sup> Consequently — as we have already noted earlier — the seeds of a contradiction which we found in Kant’s problematic treatment of freedom in the *Transcendental Dialectic* will reappear once more in the specific vocabulary of his moral philosophy.

Kant’s description of man as a genuine moral agent, fully accountable for his actions, is counterbalanced by a great emphasis put upon human receptivity. Since man is such a receptive creature “. . . and consequently always dependent with respect to what he needs for complete satisfaction with his condition, he can never be wholly free from desires and inclinations,”<sup>17</sup> so that a perfectly moral performance is only “an archetype which we should strive to approach”<sup>18</sup> and, adds Kant, “to such a level of moral disposition no creature can ever attain.”<sup>19</sup> But this emphasis upon the *essentially* receptive character of human agent is — again — applied only to man as belonging to the world of *appearances*. When we consider man in what he is *beyond* that world, his actions become at once totally spontaneous and independent not only from physical, but from psychological mechanisms as well.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, whatever factors may determine our *empirical* volition, they are utterly powerless to influence the “real,” supersensible self of the agent: their action goes no further and endures no longer than the attitude (freely chosen by the intelligible self) of allowing them some margin of influence. Viewed from that angle, the agent “. . . does not even hold himself responsible for those inclinations or impulses or attribute them to his proper self, i.e., will [as intelligible — P.H.] though he does ascribe to his will the indulgence which he may grant to them when he



permits them an influence on his maxims to the detriment of the rational laws of his will.”<sup>21</sup> Kant’s treatment of the “radical evil in human nature” — in his *Religion within the limits of reason alone* — continues and deepens that trend of thought. In committing an evil action, I identify myself with a private interest or inclination instead of following the rule of the categorical imperative. But this does not mean that interests or inclinations are the factors determining the performance of an action. Kant states his premise quite clearly: it is “. . . of great importance to morality, that [. . .] an incentive can determine the will to an action *only so far as the individual has incorporated it into his maxim* (has made it a general rule in accordance with which he will conduct himself); only thus can an incentive, whatever it may be, coexist with the absolute spontaneity of the will (i.e., freedom).”<sup>22</sup> Thus interest *as interest* has no power of its own to generate the performance of an action. The priority of some private interest over the moral law is simply the (freely chosen) priority of one type of maxim over another; hence the source of evil “. . . cannot lie in an object *determining* the will through inclination, nor yet in a natural impulse; it can lie only in a rule made by the will for the use of its freedom, that is, in a maxim.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, when I subsume my interests and inclinations under the rules which can pass the test of universalizability — I act “morally”; when I subsume the same interests and inclinations under the rule which subordinates the requirement of universalizability to some particular goal or purpose, I perform an action which is morally condemnable. In either case, what decides the course of my conduct is not the influence of interest and inclinations, but a free commitment of my “proper self” to a certain hierarchy of maxims. And even though it is true that a certain pattern of choices and commitments flowing from my proper self may very well indicate the presence of some propensity or disposition in my intelligible character, “. . . this disposition itself must have been adopted by free choice . . .”<sup>24</sup>; to advance a different view would be to destroy the very notion of human activity.

Now, the description of man as a totally free and spontaneous agent *is* what captures man’s “proper self”; we have already seen how, for Kant, our intelligible self is, in some sense, more essential and more real than our receptive, empirical personality. And yet, at the same time, this latter is also claimed to be *necessary* for any *human* (or even finite in general) agent.

This tension in Kant’s view of human agency (man is meant to be a creature of need and inclination and yet what he “truly” is turns out to be the supersensible self) is just an example of a more general conceptual conflict which permeates several aspects of Kant’s critical philosophy and which provides Hegel with an opportunity to advance an important series of arguments against the whole distinction between the “supersensible” and its (sensible) manifestations. Hegel’s arguments will be particularly relevant to our present concerns, for they will bring to full light the contradictions inherent in Kant’s position and they will allow us to see Hegel’s own conception as growing out of his discussion and criticism of Kant.

The arguments I am referring to can be found in Hegel's treatment of Perception and Understanding in *Phenomenology of Mind* and in the *Encyclopedia*, as well as in his discussion of Appearance in the *Science of Logic* (*Logic of Essence*, Sect. II, Chapters I, II, III.) The topics of Hegel's analysis in those sections are in many respects different. Sometimes he deals with the relation between the (supersensible) individual "thing" and its manifold properties, sometimes with the (equally supersensible) "force" and its phenomenal expressions. Nevertheless — as we shall see soon — the argument remains basically the same and it is targeted, first and foremost, on the positions of critical philosophy. This is sometimes hard to see in the *Phenomenology of Mind*, as the chapter on Perception seems to dwell, for the most part at least, upon various pre-critical interpretations of perceptual knowledge. (Only the last part of that chapter studies and refutes some typically Kantian moves, although the same criticisms are valid with respect to certain positions taken by Locke). Nevertheless, in the *Science of Logic* as well as in the part of the *Encyclopedia* that corresponds to it, those very same arguments are reproduced in the *Logic of Essence*, which is devoted mainly to the refutation of critical philosophy.

At the end of the chapter on Perception in the *Phenomenology of Mind*,<sup>25</sup> Hegel considers the following attempt to cope with the task of reconciling the reality of (supersensible) individuals with the reality of (sensible) properties. We could try, it would seem, to look at things from two different points of view. We can first consider the object in the form of "for itself" — it will then appear to us as an individual unit, a bare particular, devoid of its manifold properties. When, instead, we choose to consider *the same object* in its form of "for another" — i.e., standing in relation to and interacting with other individual units — it will appear as endowed with many properties, formed through its interactions with other things. Now the importance of these two perspectives for the interpretation of knowledge here at issue is very uneven. It is only when we consider the object in its *first* form (i.e., independently of its external relations and interactions) that the object can be grasped in its *essential* character: "it is by itself a simple determinate characteristic which constitutes its essential character, distinguishing it from others."<sup>26</sup> This characteristic must be a "determinate" (a qualitative) one, for the individuality of a *real* object cannot be guaranteed by a purely numerical distinction; at this point Hegel concurs with Leibniz and has already made his position clear.<sup>27</sup> Now, since the *essence* of the thing is to be found in that "single characteristic" which the thing is when removed (in our thought of it) from the web of its relations and interactions with other things, it follows that the diverse properties, which that thing happens to acquire on account of its existence in the form of "for another" are *not* parts of the essential core of the thing. ". . . because the determinate characteristic gives the essence of the thing, by which it is distinguished from others and has a being all of its own, this further manifold constitution is something indifferent."<sup>28</sup> This does not mean that it is possible

to conceive an individual object which would *exist* without interacting with other objects and — hence — without having all those manifold properties; such a hypothesis has been already refuted at an earlier stage.<sup>29</sup> Both aspects — the unity of the thing and the multiplicity of its properties — must be interpreted as belonging to the content of the thing. However, this content will appear as “one” (a single particular) only when considered in the form of “for itself”; in order to see it as a manifold of properties we must consider it from a different (“for another”) perspective.

The contradiction in such an articulation of the nature of things becomes clear now. The thing is said to have its “essential characteristic” when considered in the form of “for itself” — not, that is, in the context of its relations and interactions with other things. At the same time, we want to claim that these relations and interactions — producing the manifold of properties — are *necessary* for a thing; if we think them away, we remove the thing’s properties too, and this leads to the destruction of our conception of the thing. We are thus straining our vocabulary beyond the breaking point. The *essence* of the thing was to be found in its “simple determinate characteristic” and yet the manifold properties are *necessary* for it as well; but what is thus necessary is different from the essential only verbally,<sup>30</sup> from which it follows at once that we have no right to ascribe the individuality and the manifoldness of the thing to two different forms under which we may choose to view it. In *one and the same respect* the thing must be both an individual bearer *and* a collection of properties. Once we agree that the latter are necessary for any meaningful conception of a thing, our own mode of speaking about things will compel us to ascribe properties to the very inner core of the thing — the thing, even when considered in its aspect of “for itself,” must already be “for another.”

Hegel’s analysis of the supersensible “force” and its phenomenal “expression” proceeds along the same lines.<sup>31</sup> The manifestation of a force is said to be necessary to it — for the force *must* express itself — and yet it is attributed to the action of another, external force which “solicits” the first force, so that a supersensible force can appear as expressing itself only when taken in its form of “for another.” But — again — if it is *necessary* for a force to express and manifest itself, then its quality of relating to and interacting with other forces must characterize it under *any* description we may want to give it — even, that is, when we decide to consider it as it is “for itself.” In other words, force and its manifestations must be considered as inseparable not only in *content*, but in *form* as well; from *one and the same perspective* the force must be “withdrawn into itself” *and* must interact with other forces. To claim — as Kant did in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* — that the force *must* express and manifest itself and yet that its expressions are due only to the actions of another, “soliciting,” force is to indulge in verbal distinctions which abolish themselves.

This excursus was necessary, for it allows us to grasp the whole thrust of Hegel’s arguments against the epistemological side of the distinction between

the supersensible and the sensible. These arguments apply, without any essential modification, to Kant's conception of human agency. Let us review briefly the results of our study of Kant's texts. The intelligible self is not a distinct, other-worldly entity, but the "proper self" of the *human* agent. Hence the intelligible subject is always necessarily bound up with need and inclination. But Kant also claims that the phenomenal expression of the intelligible self in an empirical character — which alone can be said to be affected by inclination and needs — is *not* what makes up the inner core of the former; it qualifies the intelligible self only insofar as that intelligible self is considered in its relation to the spatio-temporal framework. Now according to the logic of Hegel's arguments, Kant cannot have it both ways: either it is impossible to hold seriously that man is *always* in the grip of his needs and interests, or else we must stop referring to them as attributable to our empirical self only, i.e., to the intelligible self in its form of "for another" (in relation to time and space). Somehow, a way must be found to reconcile those two conflicting claims; we must be able to ascribe needs and interests to human agents even when the latter are considered as intelligible selves. It is not sufficient to hold that one and the same agent may be viewed as active and passive depending upon the perspective we choose to adopt. Once more, the difference ought to be abolished not only in content, but in form as well: man must be receptive and spontaneous in the same respect and within the same conception.

But — and this is the second part of Hegel's argument as I am trying to reconstruct it here — when Kant *does* attempt to construe the intelligible self as being influenced by inclinations and impulses he cannot accommodate this claim within the overall framework he is committed to in his theory of human agency. This part of Hegel's argument is brought out with clarity in the course of his critical appraisal of Kant's moral philosophy in the *Phenomenology of Mind*. Kant emphasizes the necessity of *disciplining* inclinations and impulses: even if it were impossible for me to eliminate and remove inclinations as springs of my action I should still be able to order them and direct them in conformity with the demands of reason. As Hegel puts it while commenting on Kant's point, inclinations and impulses ". . . ought not to be suppressed, but merely to be in conformity with reason."<sup>32</sup> But, Hegel continues, how is it possible to *account* for this kind of moral discipline given the Kantian framework? For if we take seriously Kant's claim that *every* human action is always (at least to some degree) causally determined by inclinations and impulses, then the very action of disciplining them must *itself* be causally determined by an impulse or an inclination. And ". . . since these latter have their own fixed character and peculiar content, the consciousness, to which *they* were to conform, would rather be in conformity with *them* — a conformity which moral consciousness declines to adopt."<sup>33</sup> Briefly, if I attempted to order and discipline my inclinations I would only be acting under the pressure of some particular inclination. Thus I would have the illusion of acting freely, but in point of fact my actions would be governed by the natural mechanism; I would *think* that I act freely, but I would not be *acting* freely.

We have explored the two main lines of Hegel's attack upon the Kantian conception of human agency. Hegel insists, *first*, that both the letter and the spirit of critical philosophy require that the empirical, phenomenal self affected by needs and interests be conceived as equally "essential" to man as the intelligible self. The priority of the latter over the former has to be abolished not only in content, but in form as well. In *one and the same respect* man must be both: 1) a spontaneous agent capable of following moral maxims independently of any causal mechanisms *and* 2) a sensuous being, a creature of need, who is always in the grip of nature. Hegel shows, *second*, that when Kant *does* attempt to consider interests and inclinations as essential components of human conduct, he is unable to reconcile this view with his conception of man as an intelligible agent. Thus to define man as essentially — in his "proper self" — an intelligible agent is to remove from our definition that aspect of human action (natural interests) without which no human action could ever occur. Conversely, any attempt to include interests and needs in the concept of human action will destroy — given the Kantian framework — any hope of preserving Kant's own conception of spontaneity and freedom. The ideas of activity and passivity are equally necessary for a proper conception of human action — and yet the Kantian framework casts them as exclusive of each other, for they cannot possibly be conceived as attributable to the same agent in the same respect.

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The conclusion that Hegel draws from these criticisms is well known. It is undeniable, he concludes, that if man is *only* a part of nature, if reason is but, in Hume's terms, "the slave of passions," then the idea of a genuine moral agent is impossible to defend. On the other hand, if such an agent is to remain a *human* agent, we cannot extract him from the natural, organic background of his impulses and needs. Somehow, a third way has to be found between those two untenable extremes.

This new way of conceiving the relation between interests and ideals is the foundation upon which Hegel builds his moral and political philosophy and his interpretation of history. We can find it in all of his major works, phrased and rephrased in different contexts and tied up with different clusters of problems. And the main idea is always the same. "Nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion" — but our passions are not just bits and pieces of nature located in individual human beings; they are ennobled, channeled and transmuted through the cultural fields of values and ideas, within which individuals act. No human action is possible without the contribution of in-

terest and desire.<sup>34</sup> Conversely, *human* interests and desires are structured and transformed by rationality.<sup>35</sup> Without material interests, ideals would never be *realized*, but without that process of “channeling” and “educating” our blind impulses, the human world would never be the home of *ideals*. The separation of the “ought” and the “is” is thus suppressed: ideals are embodied in the *actual* performance of men and a genuine moral performance is compatible with the influence of impulse upon the agent.

When we talk about “ideals” we do not mean, of course, their explicit articulations in the consciousness of a moralist or a philosopher; we mean the totality of values and interpretations embedded in social practices and institutions. In effect, for Hegel, that “practical” and “real” life of ideas is prior to and — in some sense — conditions the ways in which men think about and articulate their world. A corollary of this view is the relative irrelevance of the study of human motives and intentions in such fields as history or political science. (Marx will go even further in that direction.) For as interests and passions of individuals express themselves within historical and cultural contexts and as history and culture are governed by their own principles, *what* those interests and passions *mean*, what they contribute to, etc., does not depend upon their immediate goals, but upon their function in the general framework of trends and antagonisms fueling the development of a particular culture or historical epoch.

The foundation of Hegel's conception of human action lies in his new understanding of *freedom*: “all the qualities of spirit exist only through freedom.”<sup>36</sup> This is why Hegel expands on his notion of freedom in the introductions to both the *Philosophy of History* and the *Philosophy of Right*. For it is in human freedom that the reconciliation of ideals and interests is accomplished. And this implies, of course, that freedom is neither the ability to “do as one pleases” (which would amount to identification of freedom with inclinations), nor is it the abstract, formal freedom of Kant, freedom of the supersensible, intelligible will (where inclinations can never appear as springs of action). In Hegel's view freedom means both: one's ability to master and structure the impulses *and* to identify oneself with them — this identification of reason with interests being now possible thanks to the ennobled and idealized character of the latter. Thus the agent must oppose himself to his impulses in order to control them and strip them of their immediacy, but he must also recognize them as an indispensable moment of his own identity as a rational agent.

This time, it seems, we get what we need. Passivity and activity are not exclusive any more. The conception of man as a free agent and evaluator is not only compatible with, but also inseparable from the conception of man as a being of need. Needs and inclination *are* essential to any human action and yet their contributions do not destroy its intelligible and ideal status, for in a properly integrated human action, needs and inclinations are purified of their blind and crude form.

The philosophical intention animating Hegel's project is thus clear. But is it equally clear that Hegel's conceptual framework is an adequate vehicle for the realization of such a project?

The rock-bottom of Hegel's view of culture and history is his conception of human freedom. Many pages have been filled by great commentators trying to explain the precise meaning of the word "freedom" in the works of Hegel. But — to the best of my knowledge — no commentator has ever attempted to tackle the question of the *proof* of freedom in Hegel. This might have been because the very idea of such a "proof" smells of traditional metaphysics, which Hegel repeatedly and consistently repudiated. Yet he himself did not hesitate to ask precisely that question and he did attempt to provide an answer to it.<sup>37</sup> And both the question and the answer are crucial for evaluating Hegel's philosophy of human (individual and collective) action. For it is precisely thanks to human freedom — as Hegel will argue in detail in the *Introduction* to his *Philosophy of Right* — that the reconciliation of interests and ideals becomes possible. Unless, then, we can demonstrate the *reality* of such freedom, our whole project of redefining the relation between reason and interests will remain nothing but a hypothetical construction — no matter how useful and powerful that construction may turn out to be when applied as the guiding concept in our study of culture and history.

What, then, *is* the "proof" that Hegel thought he could marshal in support of his belief in the reality of human freedom? This is how he speaks of this proof in the *Introduction* to the *Philosophy of Right*:

The proof that the will is free and the proof of the nature of the will and freedom can be established [...] only as a link in the whole chain of [philosophy]. The fundamental premises of this proof are that mind to start with is intelligence, that the phases through which it passes in its development from feeling, through representative thinking, to thinking proper, are the road along which it produces itself as will, and that will, as practical mind in general, is the truth of intelligence, the shape next above it. These premises I have expounded in my *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*...<sup>38</sup>

The sections of the *Encyclopedia* — which are a compressed and modified version of the corresponding parts of the *Phenomenology* — to which Hegel refers us, retrace the development of the theoretical reason. The concluding stages of that development lead to the emergence of the *practical* reason. The initial assumption of theoretical reason — in both the *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopedia* — is the conviction that reality is not an alien object confronting human knowledge, but that, in some sense, it is a reflection, a sediment of our own cognitive activity. This view is then tested by the whole development of the theoretical reason; at the end of this development, theoretical reason evolves into practical reason, which will operate on the assumption that the "theoretical" idealism is true and will then attempt to validate that conception of reality by its own — strictly *practical* — activity. Thus the "proof" of freedom is to be found, according to Hegel, in the internal development of the theoretical reason from its initial stages up to the moment when its "idealism" becomes confirmed through an elaborate series of tests presented in the

*Phenomenology* and in the *Encyclopedia*. In other words, human will is “free,” i.e., men can proceed to and *succeed* in changing the world and their own impulses; reality is malleable to human action, only because that very same reality has been proved to be, not an alien “other” which confronts our reason, but the work of reason’s own spontaneity. Thus, the proof of freedom relies, ultimately, upon the autonomy of human reason with respect to reality.

The expression “*human* reason” is the only one appropriate for describing the kind of cognition Hegel is studying in the parts of the *Encyclopedia* (and the *Phenomenology*) now at issue. Whatever may be the ultimate metaphysical implications of the Hegelian notion of *Geist*, they do not have any explanatory functions in the chapters Hegel refers us to. It is the *human* reason which examines reality and interprets it as derived from *human* thought. This is why the corresponding parts of the *Encyclopedia* belong to the science of the “subjective mind,” this is why, too, Hegel’s earlier treatment of the problem can be found in the *first* volume of the *Phenomenology*. Human freedom is proved by our reason’s discovery of the creative character of its own activities; reality, here, is interpreted as a system derived from and reflecting the structure of our thinking. Such is both the initial assumption and the end result of those stages in the itinerary of spirit. The “proof” that man is free is offered by the confirmation of the initial impulse of our reason to interpret reality as its own sediment.

It is not by accident, then, that the corresponding parts of the *Phenomenology* (*Certainty and Truth of Reason. A. Observation as function of reason*) begin with an analysis of the (“subjective”) idealism of Fichte. The tension which threatens to explode such idealistic views of knowledge and of reality provides the point of departure for a whole series of experiences through which subjective idealism attempts to translate its “certainty” into a valid “truth.” This tension, this internal antagonism *must* appear, because the initial claim of the pure I to be the ground of reality is immediately violated by the presence of the objective world: the pure I confronts a reality which claims *its* independence and which contradicts the pure self’s pretension to total autonomy. Hence the impulse, the drive of reason to confirm its own autonomy by providing a detailed demonstration that empirical reality is not a collection of alien entities, but a rational, ordered system, constituted through the spontaneity of pure I. And therefore reason’s endless search for order in the world is not a disinterested game pursued for its own sake; it is always guided and animated by a profound ontological commitment — the conception of reality as a reflection of our thought. This is the “universal *interest* of reason” [my italics — P.H.] Hegel talks about.<sup>39</sup> This, too, is the driving force of the theoretical reason as described in the *Encyclopedia*: reason “. . . has to do with the rational as its immediate affection, which it must render its own.”<sup>40</sup> Once again, Hegel’s point is the same: the initial assumption of the rational self has to be tested by reason’s ability to interpret the allegedly “independent” and opaque reality as a reflection of human thought. And the modes of that interpretation — Intuition, Representation and Thinking — are the modes of



*human* cognition. Not, to be sure, of a private and solipsistic knower, but of the transcendental subject of Idealism. Still, it is beyond doubt that Hegel is talking about modes and forms of human knowledge, which will develop and interpret itself up to the final point where reason actually succeeds in conceiving reality as its own reflection. Thus when Hegel studies, in the *Encyclopedia*, even such elementary forms of human cognition as intuition or memory, his purpose is completely different from what it was in his treatment of sense-certainty or perception. For all modes of cognition — no matter how elementary and “immediate” they may be — are *now* considered as so many ways and means through which reason attempts to validate its “idealism.” *This* is the claim which will not be confirmed through sensing, remembering, etc. — and *this* is the claim which will press human knowledge to find better and better forms of apprehending reality. For it is one and the same impulse of reason which first attempts to fulfill itself through intuition and then moves on to representation (*Vorstellung*) and thinking (*Denken*). We do not assume — as we did at the stage of sense-certainty or perception — that what counts as real is set over against our cognition; rather, we are trying to find the best means for validating our initial claim that reality is derived from reason.

A brief review of Hegel's most significant moves will make his position clearer.

In paragraphs 446-450 of the *Encyclopedia* Hegel concentrates on “intuition” as a possible vehicle of the self-confirmation of reason. It is thus “subjective reason as intuition”<sup>41</sup> that we must analyze. And indeed, from the very beginning (paragraph 446) Hegel opposes sensing and intuiting as defined at the (present) stage of *reason*, to the corresponding forms of “soul” and “consciousness.” The soul (*Seele*) — object of Hegelian “Anthropology” — is not yet capable of introducing a sharp distinction between the self and the objective world. At that stage of the developing mind human feelings and sensations are still vague, diffuse and unstructured. With “consciousness” (sense-certainty, perception, understanding), feelings and sensations are already referred to independent objects, which are said to “affect” the knower. In the case of *Seele*, mind cannot disentangle itself from the natural background of impulses, feelings, etc.; in the case of consciousness (*Bewusstsein*) feelings and sensations are derived from the action of physical objects which confront human minds as alien, independent entities. But the function of feeling and sensing is still different at the stage of reason. “Now, thirdly and lastly, feeling signifies the form which mind as such, which is the unity and truth of soul and consciousness, *gives itself* [my italics — P.H.] in the first instance.”<sup>42</sup> In other words, intuition, here, is neither a mental experience as it is lived (at the stage of the “soul”) prior to the emergence of the objective I nor is it the result of an “affection” by some independent entities (as in “consciousness”). It is, rather, a particular *method* that human cognition employs in order to discover itself in the content. To be sure, *that* method is not yet appropriate to the overall purpose of the theoretical reason: “. . . the form of selfish singleness to which feel-

ing renders the mind is the lowest and worst vehicle it can have . . .”<sup>43</sup> In such crude form of knowledge human reason will not be able to grasp the rational order of the world. Still, even that intuitive mode of cognition is already a form and a method of human *reason*. Its defining feature is not a reference to some independent collection of entities, but the fact that the basic rule which reason employs here is “the form of selfish singleness” — i.e., such conception, where bits and pieces of knowledge are considered separately, without any reference to larger conceptual schemes. To abandon this “crude” intuition will not mean to find a better way of accounting for the relation between the knower and some independent reality; rather, it will mean to attempt to find new, more flexible methods of confirming reason’s initial “idealistic” commitment. Thus, for example, even when we begin to consider sensation as being sensation *of* something (I hear the sound *of a bell*, etc.), this objectification of intuitions is, *here*, a move of reason and is interpreted as such by the knower himself. Hegel will describe it as an attempt to find a more adequate method of confirming reason’s autonomy over reality and *not* just as a way of referring mental data to some physical objects which would lead a life independent of the life of mind. “Intelligence thus defines the content of sensation as something that is out of itself, projects it into time and space, which are the forms in which it is intuitive.”<sup>44</sup> It is thus intelligence itself, which combines those “singular” representations into fixed and permanent objects. Objectivity is here another device, another instrument taken up by human reason striving towards self-confirmation. The imperfection of the intuitive cognition *at this stage* is not its confinement to the function of reflecting independent sensible particulars, but its inability to relate *its own* conceptions to each other and to discriminate between the essential and the unessential, the lawful and the contingent, etc.

This inadequacy of the intuitive mode of thinking disappears progressively as we follow Hegel’s discussion of representation (*Vorstellung*) and *its* forms — recollection (*Erinnerung*), imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) and memory (*Gedächtniss*). We cannot discuss here, of course, all the twists and turns of the development of these stages of “subjective mind.” Let us note, however, the general direction of this progression: it is meant to represent reason’s increasing ability to transcend the use of a cognitive approach based on the priority of distinct and separable bits of knowledge. By “inwardizing” its contents, by relating them to each other in comparison, memory, language, etc., reason gets closer and closer to the conception of reality as an ordered, rational system. This goal is finally reached in the third form of theoretical reason — thinking (*Denken*). It is only here that the human mind can discover the proper medium for expressing and validating its initial assumption that reality is not an alien “other,” but a sediment of reason’s own spontaneity. This is the main point that Hegel will make in paragraph 465 of the *Encyclopedia*. And this conclusion — as he will tell us in the *Introduction* to his *Philosophy of Right* — provides us with the *proof* of human freedom. Reality — which means not only our external environment, but our needs and impulses as

well — is malleable to human will because 1) our will is not a separate faculty, but *reason itself* in its practical functions<sup>45</sup> and 2) reality is not independent of our reason.

Let us repeat it once more: in his proof of freedom of the will Hegel builds upon the notion of the autonomy of *human* reason. He does not appeal to the notion of “absolute spirit” and his analysis is meant to bring to light the ultimate potential of human subjectivity as defined already in Kant and Fichte. Our freedom follows from the fact that our reason does not confront a ready-made, “given” reality, but turns out to be the ground of the latter.

Yet, of course, there is something one-sided in what we have just said. For Hegel does not want to absorb reality in the formal  $I = I$  of the transcendental idealism; the self is meant to be “autonomous” not in the sense of producing or destroying reality, but rather in the sense of “reconciling” itself with it, of setting itself *within* the world and within its own needs and inclinations. Thus, the agent — we have said it before — must acquire both the ability to master and direct his blind impulses *and* a sense of his identity with them; he must be an *embodied* agent, whose will expresses itself in his needs and inclinations. Thus Spinoza and Schelling are equally as important to Hegel’s theory as are Kant and Fichte.

But this also means that we must rephrase our old question in a new context. Is it possible — we must now ask — to reconcile a conception of freedom which relies so heavily on the idea of the autonomy of the rational self with Hegel’s claim that human agency cannot be separated and extracted from the web of natural needs and interests? We can answer this question only by taking a look at the specific moves through which Hegel is trying to reconcile the two aspects of human action. We must see if his project can be successfully accomplished with the help of concepts and ideas that he uses.

Hegel’s description of freedom in the *Introduction* to the *Philosophy of Right* follows the principles of dialectical logic. To begin with, there is the “universal” aspect of freedom. Thanks to it, the agent can step back and disentangle himself from every particular “content,” i.e., from the web of natural, psychological and social mechanisms and givens. Insofar as man has this capacity he can always refuse to succumb to various pressures of his situation, his social environment and so forth. This is the *negative* aspect of freedom, which Hegel describes as the “. . . dissipation of every restriction and every content either immediately presented by nature, by needs, desires and impulses, or given and determined by any means whatever.”<sup>46</sup> This is the “freedom of the void,” which can only be realized in the “fury of destruction.” Thus, freedom must involve, second, our ability to express the independence from all content through an uncoerced and self-imposed acceptance of a certain goal which constitutes, not a cause, but a *reason* of our action. For in order to generate some positive results, our “universal power of abstraction” *has* to be completed by some way of giving itself a goal. Let us consider this “particularization” of freedom more carefully. I am not free unless I can *choose* my reactions to a

given situation; a conditioned reflex does not specify me as a *free* being. If it were not for that ability to choose, my reactions would be determined by objective processes and events within which my action occurs. Now what does my ability to "choose" presuppose? First of all, if I were not able to escape the course of natural and social mechanisms, I would not be in a position to choose my attitude and reaction with respect to them; thus, the necessary condition of my choice is that "negative" freedom Hegel is talking about. Next, to make a choice means to *exclude* one possibility for the sake of another; by choosing this or that attitude with respect to my family or social environment I automatically exclude all sorts of other possible attitudes. Briefly, the choice is always a *determinate* one. In order to make a determinate choice, my free will has to *recognize itself* in a specific system of goals. Of course, if this recognition is to be an act of freedom, then the goals and purposes with which my will identifies itself cannot be imposed upon it from outside. Still, the exercise of its capacity to choose would be impossible if it did not adhere to a set of *self-imposed* goals and values, which will constitute the *reasons* of a particular determinate choice.

We have seen that both the "negative" and the "positive" aspects are the necessary conditions of a free action. However, they are not its sufficient conditions yet. The third aspect — of "individuality" — is not a pedantic idea of a philosopher enamored of his metaphysical triads, but a truly essential component of a genuinely free action. In effect, it is not enough that the will choose to identify itself with some content; it is also necessary that the agent be able to preserve and assert his identity through all the vicissitudes, changes and upheavals in his particular situation. Thus the universality and particularity of the will come together in the agent's ability to establish all of his actions and deeds as genuinely *his*, not as alien products of circumstances. "The will is the unity of both these moments. It is particularity reflected into itself and so brought back to universality, i.e., it is individuality. It is the *self-determination* of the ego, which means that at one and the same time the ego posits itself as its own negative, i.e., as restricted and determinate, and yet remains by itself, i.e., in its self-identity and universality."<sup>47</sup>

Whatever may be the progress that Hegel's conception represents here with respect to Kant's moral philosophy, it does not seem to be able to lead us beyond the essential limitations of the latter. And these are the same limitations that Hegel was pointing out in his criticism of Kant. Let us simply take a more careful look at Hegel's present positions. Freedom, Hegel holds, defines itself in several ways; and it is only beyond the stage of "negative freedom" that the rational agent will begin to reconcile interests and ideals. For it is only then that the negative freedom, the "fury of destruction" gives way to the agent's acceptance of a specific social role as well as of his natural interests and needs. From that moment on, human action and evaluation will move within the concept of embodiment. Our needs and interests will be used as fuel for history and for ethical community; to that extent the gratification of those needs will not contradict the requirements of ideals. But this "holistic" trend in Hegel's

conception clashes at once with its "Kantian" component. For the agent remains autonomous and non-sensible at least to the extent that it is *up to him* either to take up and identify himself with his needs and interests or to repress them by attempting to act out the idea of negative freedom. Thus, interests *as interests*, needs *as needs*, play no direct role in the determination of human conduct; whatever part they may have will depend only upon the stand taken by the agent himself. And that stand — a commitment to one special way of understanding the meaning of freedom — is *not* shaped and influenced by the agent's interests. It is the agent himself who chooses to adopt one stance or another with respect to his needs and interests. The word "choice," used in the present context by a brilliant commentator<sup>48</sup> is entirely appropriate here. Of course such choice of attitude towards our needs is not an act of conscious deliberation and volition: we cannot "will" a "form of willing." Rather, all conscious willing and deliberating is already structured by the basic attitude of the agent towards his needs and interests. But that attitude, defining the overall function of interests and needs in the life of an individual, reflects only *that individual's* commitment to a form of life. And the type of commitment at issue is not and cannot be shaped by the agent's needs and interests — and this precisely to the extent that the function of the latter is determined entirely by the individual's understanding of freedom. Thus our needs are here ". . . a mere possibility by which it [the ego] is not constrained and in which it is confined only because it has put itself in it."<sup>49</sup> The "Additions" to the *Philosophy of Right* (taken from the notes of Hegel's students) are here even clearer and perfectly consistent with the position of the master: "Man [. . .] stands above his impulses and may make them his own, put them in himself as his own. An impulse is something natural, but to put it into my ego depends on my will which thus cannot fall back on the plea that the impulse has its basis in nature."<sup>50</sup> Even the notion of "evil" is explained in the spirit of Kant's analysis of the "radical evil"; an immoral conduct does not mean the domination of inclinations over ethical law, but a free adoption of a wrong maxim as a rule of our actions.<sup>51</sup> Thus the notion of the total autonomy of a rational agent rules out any possibility of attributing to our needs some part in determining our ultimate decisions and evaluations.

Consequently, the very same arguments that Hegel advanced against Kant will apply, almost without modification, to Hegel's own theory. Let us recall, briefly, the general outline of Hegel's main argument. Kant, Hegel argued, was committed to two irreconcilable views: 1) no human action is possible without at least some contribution of an interest or an inclination; 2) a genuine moral performance ought to exclude all inclinations as springs of human conduct. Hence, when the (Kantian) agent attempts to control and order his inclinations, that action itself — being, as it obviously is, a piece of *human* conduct — will turn out to have been triggered by some need or inclination. Thus the lofty struggle of moral reason with inclinations is only an image in the mind of the agent; in *reality* the agent engaged in that struggle is in the grip of his

own peculiar inclination (fear of his drives, inability to gratify them anyway, etc.)

But Hegel is here in no better position than Kant was. The total spontaneity of the subject, once posited, wrecks the whole project of integrating independent needs and inclinations into the framework of human action. And since independent needs cannot be reconciled with the autonomy of the agent yet *are claimed to be essential* to the concept of human conduct, those needs and interests will reappear through the back door, destroying the very notion of autonomy that we wanted to preserve. Hegel's conception is here burdened with the same contradiction that he so clearly saw in Kant! The agent may *think* that he takes a stand about his inclinations, but in point of fact, his behavior is *caused* by some hidden inclination or need. Even that "negative freedom" would not be — as Hegel claims — "the unrestricted possibility of abstraction from every determinate state of mind," but the effect of some causal factors which are beyond the control and even consciousness of the agent. The claim to autonomy either is here an empty word, or, if it is taken seriously, it will immediately turn into its very opposite. Since the content is not united with the form to begin with, it will invade the latter from the outside and destroy its alleged autonomy. Hegel cannot resolve this dilemma within the framework of his own philosophy — no more than Kant could. For to take the notion of total autonomy seriously — the move which Hegel makes both in his description and his proof of freedom — rules out any possibility of interpreting human needs as genuine springs of action. And this exclusion of the content from the form will revenge itself on Hegel just as it did on Kant.

And so, it seems, the only thing we could do at this point would be to appeal to the "absolute spirit," which would emerge — *deus ex machina* — to save us from our conceptual difficulties. It could then be argued that the final reconciliation of freedom and nature is possible since human needs and desires are already "an sich" pulsations of the infinite *rational* spirit and can therefore coalesce with the freedom of a finite *rational* agent. But this answer — needless to say — would have been totally unacceptable to the philosopher of *Begriff*. He has ridiculed such a way of thinking in his countless criticisms of Schelling; his is certainly not the habit of applying the magic formula of "identity of opposites" to save himself the trouble of solving a particular problem. It is of no use to claim that freedom and nature are reconciled "an sich" in the absolute spirit; in order to be faithful to Hegel's intention we would still have to show *how* this can be done in terms of the specific structure of human agency. And this does not seem to be feasible given Hegel's point of departure. For if it is only up to the agent to determine what part his interests will play in his conduct, then the interests are not *really* parts of the former; once again, we are caught up in the self-sufficient circle of autonomy, choice, etc.

But, one could object, doesn't Hegel insist that there simply *are* no "attitudes" and "choices" that could be separated from their expressions in (bodily) action and speech? And doesn't that mean — as it is argued in a recent

book<sup>52</sup> — that this “expressivism” of Hegel is inseparable from a theory of embodiment?

The issue is crucial to our concerns. It cannot be resolved on the level of generalities or through a desperate appeal to Hegel’s grandiose scheme of “reconciling the opposites.” We must take a look at the ways in which Hegel employs the idea of expression in his specific analyses. For it is not the general *intention* of the philosopher that is in doubt here; what is at issue is the possibility of realizing the Hegelian project within the conceptual framework to which Hegel was committed. Our doubts and objections will have to be tested against Hegel’s specific analyses of the “expressive” character of human thought and feeling; we will have to see if the expressivism of the philosopher is a satisfying answer to those doubts and objections.

Let us first consider Hegel’s account of the relation between human actions and our intentions, motives, character traits, etc. — “intentions and subtleties of that sort” as Hegel calls them.<sup>53</sup> A philosophical theory of mind committed to the separability of intention and action can be phrased in stronger and weaker terms. Its stronger version comes down to the claim that intention is not only (“ontologically”) separable from action, but can even be known and identified independently of the latter. We can, so the claim goes, impute to a person a “criminal” intention, which he somehow manages to hide by constantly refusing to commit criminal actions or, quite simply, by not finding appropriate circumstances to commit them. And it certainly would seem plausible to assume that at least the agent himself can know what his intentions are *without* testing them through the observation of his conduct; after all, our introspection is always available to give us immediate access to the private screen of our mental life. A weaker form of this theory would be to claim that even though the intention cannot be *known* independently of the action that originated in it, it would still at least make perfect sense to say that there *is* an intention which is distinct and separable from the action that corresponds to it.

Hegel rejects both of these views. First, then, the only way that we can *know* what the intention is is to look at and interpret the action. This is particularly clear in the case of our knowledge of others. Not only do we have no instruments to infer someone else’s mental states as they are in themselves (What would these instruments be? Reasoning by analogy? How could it be established?), but Hegel will attempt to prove that only in action can the intention be known as it *really* is. Against the positions taken by the “science” of *Physiognomy*, Hegel will quote with approval a vivid illustration given by Lichtenberg: a person who *acts* honestly but is accused (on account of his “face”) of harboring sinister intentions has the perfect right to box the accuser on the ear.<sup>54</sup> And the same applies to self-knowledge as well — what my intentions really are is only demonstrated by the sort of actions I perform.<sup>55</sup> Hegel adds that the consequences and other people’s interpretations of my behavior may very well, in some cases, disfigure its original intent; nevertheless, these special cases are deviations from the norm and can only be understood in terms

of the latter. For it is only because actions *are*, on the overall level, genuine expressions of intentions that we focus on them to begin with.

But it is not only that we cannot identify and know the intention independently of the action; action is what makes the intention what it *is*. Action is *creative* in that an intention which would be separated from it would have to remain forever an unreal shadow, a “nothing.” Some people, of course, claim that just the opposite is the case. They will insist that an action, precisely because it is always specific, determinate and unambiguous, means the *distortion* of the original meaning of the intention: the subtleties and nuances of the intention are *lost* in the sharply defined form of the action. A person who robbed a bank for material gain is called a criminal and a thief — this is the clear meaning that our culture and vocabulary bestow upon the action at issue. But the proponent of “intentions” would object here: the bank robber’s intentions were more subtle than that, there was also the rage of a deprived human being, a need to prove himself a man of physical courage, etc. But such talk about the infinitely rich and complex intentions of the agent will lead to nothing but conceptual confusion: we will not even be able to *say what we mean*. For it is only the act that “. . . does away with the inexpressionableness of what self-conscious individuality really »means«; in regard to such »meaning«, individuality is endlessly determined and determinable. This false infinite, this endless determining, is abolished in the complete act. The act is [. . .] murder, theft, a benefit, a deed of bravery, and so on, and what it *is* can be *said* of it.”<sup>56</sup> But what is only “meant” and “inexpressible” is “untrue”;<sup>57</sup> hence intention cannot be said to have any reality independent of action. Or, to put it in the strong terms which would be more appropriate to the present context: the articulation of intention in action (and in speech) *creates* the intention. It is not that a person first harbors some “ambitious” intentions and then chooses to express them in one way or another; rather, his vague urge is created *as ambition* through his commitment to a specific goal and through his way of describing and identifying “how he feels.” It is a *different feeling* that comes to light in the “ambition” to achieve a state of nirvana and the “ambition” to make a million dollars. The quality of the feeling is so transformed by the cultural and linguistic framework of its expressions that we may not be able to identify it in terms of another framework. And if this is true, if we cannot even identify an intention independently of its expressions, then even less can we use such “intentions and subtleties” in attempting to *explain* human actions. Indeed, what could that mean: to explain human choices by “. . . all sorts of faculties, inclinations and passions”?<sup>58</sup> For example, the life of a successful politician would be explained by his “ambition,” “greed” and so on. This kind of account, Hegel first points out, reifies human personality interpreting it as a bundle of separate and distinct properties which exist “. . . alongside one another in the mind as in a kind of bag”<sup>59</sup> — so that the *unity* of man’s personality becomes totally incomprehensible.<sup>60</sup> In the crude psychological explanations “ambition” or “shrewdness” appear as anonymous or context-free



properties, whereas in fact they are from the very beginning the ambition and the shrewdness *of* this particular person, acting and speaking in this particular cultural context. Such crude psychology is incapable of going beyond a (sterile and uninteresting) classification of individuals in terms of some general properties; it will never *understand* this concrete human personality. For an individual is defined, Hegel insists, not by the degree to which he possesses some general propensities or intentions, but by the way in which he takes them up and expresses them in the field of meanings pertaining to his historical and cultural situation. Thus, the agent's individual background — his conscious and unconscious motives, intentions, etc. — is only a vague task for him; how he *cope*s with it is shaped by values and interpretations permeating the agent's culture, and the task is *nothing* outside of specific solutions.

The explanatory power of psychological determinism is not reinforced with the introduction of a new concept: disposition. For what do we really gain in attempting to understand human conduct when we assert that the actions of — let us say — a hired assassin are caused by his “disposition to murder”? First of all, a particular disposition — whatever that word may mean — is difficult to isolate and to treat separately. Mental experiences, when considered — as they must be here — independently of the actions that sharpen them and specify them, are not arranged in a spatial framework where one could assign a specific slot for each disposition and separate it from all the others. Dispositions — like feelings — are all fused in that state of “interpenetration” that Bergson will describe a hundred years after Hegel.<sup>61</sup> What, indeed, is the “disposition” preceding and causing murder and considered independently of the latter? Is it a disposition openly to vent one's aggressions? Or to compensate at all cost for “childhood deprivations”? Or — again — the disposition to consider lightly the value of human life? There is no way that we could specify and isolate the disposition which is the cause of the action.

This, of course, is not what the defender of “dispositions” would grant. The explanatory power of dispositions is assured — so the claim goes — because 1) we *can* isolate and specify the disposition that has caused the action at issue, and 2) the number of these dispositions is limited and within our grasp. As Hegel puts it: “The poorer idea we have of mind, the easier the matter becomes in that respect. . . .”<sup>62</sup> But the question is: assuming that we *could* isolate and specify the disposition independently of the action, would we then be in a position to use it as a concept with the adequate explanatory power? Hegel thinks not. For, first, when we say that the possession of a disposition by the agent explains his actions, we are not advancing one bit in our understanding of them. To attribute a disposition is not yet sufficient to explain the occurrence of a particular action. For example, if we notice that *this* bank robber didn't hesitate to shoot and kill when cornered by security guards, if we then generalize this observation and say — truly, but trivially — that the subject has a disposition to kill when cornered, we have not illuminated anybody. We still have to explain the action and — as it now turns out — the disposition as

well; the disposition at issue must be explained to the extent that its description is simply a vacuous and generalized description of the action and the action is still in need of explanation. Considering, then, this logical dependence of the disposition upon action, we must refuse to impute a disposition to a subject who fails to act in the expected way. But this, of course, is something that the defender of the disposition would have to reject. On the assumption that dispositions *are* logically independent of actions, we would have to claim that a person may very well not *act* as a murderer and yet possess that "disposition" to murder — and we would have to explain the lack of action by the absence of favorable circumstances. The disposition would be dormant in the agent, but not yet actualized: even though ". . . this quality is not really present [. . .] it *should* be there."<sup>63</sup> But then the ascription of a disposition can become a *prediction* only if conjoined with the specification of those "favorable circumstances" that trigger the action: the bank robber's disposition to kill will become "actualized" only if he is not afraid that his picture will be taken and registered by the T.V. cameras, etc. Thus the ascription of a disposition to the agent becomes a prediction only if we give reasons for it outside of the disposition itself. Further, disposition is inseparable from what the agent *makes* of it. And this is why such an agent is a *free* one. ". . . the non-actuality of the law proposed and hence the observations conflicting with the law, are bound to come out just for the reason that the freedom of the individual and developing circumstances are indifferent towards what merely is;<sup>64</sup> "What merely *is*, without participating in spiritual activity, is a thing for consciousness, and so little is it the essence of mind that it is rather the very opposite of it, and consciousness is only actual for itself by the negation and abolition of such being,"<sup>65</sup> which is another way of saying that "man is free."<sup>66</sup>

But one would object, isn't Hegel phrasing his position too strongly? Let us grant that all dispositions, intentions and feelings are shaped and changed by the forms of "objective spirit" providing individuals with the pool of their interpretations and evaluations. What about those forms themselves? Aren't they, at least, just "given"?

Nothing could be further from Hegel's position. It is not just that freedom can always opt for that terrible "negative" form that Hegel describes in the *Philosophy of Right*; it is also that the identification of the individual with his cultural context is dependent upon his own attitude and commitment. We have already seen<sup>67</sup> that Hegel will hold this view in the *Philosophy of Right*. But its sound phenomenological bases are worked out in the *Phenomenology* itself. Hegel's position is clear and explicit: an individual is not a *product* of his ". . . universal inorganic nature, viz., the given circumstances, situation, habits, customs, religion and so forth."<sup>68</sup> Human agents are defined by their capacity to take a *stand* or choose an *attitude* with respect to their social environment and this choice depends only upon the individual himself. "On that account *what* is to have an influence on individuality and what *sort* of influence it is to have — depend entirely on individuality itself . . ."<sup>69</sup> Briefly,

this or that aspect of my culture has the power to “influence” my actions only because, by a free choice of my specific identity, *I myself* have picked out that aspect as in some way “important” and relevant. Thus the social world — the individual’s *culture*, which provides him with a pool of interpretations and roles — is also the world of *that* particular individual. It is illuminated and ordered by a free choice of values and ends which determines how the individual sees his culture and reacts to it. “. . . on account of this freedom of the individual, the world of the individual is only to be understood from the individual himself [. . .] the individual either lets the stream of reality flowing in upon it have its way, or breaks off and diverts the current of its influences.”<sup>70</sup> Freedom, then, is the fundamental structure underlying all properly human activities.<sup>71</sup>

We have said enough about the meaning of “expression” to show that this concept is not going to be decisive in solving our difficulties. It is undeniable that thoughts, intentions, feelings, etc., cannot be separated, for Hegel, from human speech and action. But the real question is: how are we to understand and account for those “expressions” themselves? What would be, for Hegel, the modes of description and explanation that ought to be employed for the purpose of studying a piece of (meaningful) human conduct? We have seen what Hegel’s answer is here: an intention, a thought, a feeling are indeed accomplished in the action, but the latter is always “free,” i.e., we cannot understand it as dependent upon any “given” factors and circumstances. For total spontaneity need not mean some mysterious mental faculty distinct and separable from its outward, public expressions. After all, even in Kant a *real* intention to act out of good will is not a Cartesian mental event, but a certain type of performance of the agent. But the point is that these actions themselves demand — in both Kant and Hegel — a type of account which rules out any influence of needs and inclinations upon them.

Professor Taylor at times suggests that it is not “expression” alone that testifies to the “embodied” character of the (Hegelian) subject, but — rather — the fact that the expressions of the *human* form of life can only take place in a *living body*, with its biological functions of production and reproduction.<sup>72</sup> Now this, undoubtedly, was Hegel’s claim. But this also means that it is not so much the emphasis on “expressions” that matters here, but the (further) claim that human evaluations and interpretations are necessarily embedded in the medium of *natural* needs and interests. And then the question is, once more: does Hegel’s conception of human agency *allow* for such a reconciliation of interests and ideals? If our earlier arguments were sound we do not seem to have any other option, than to answer that question negatively.

But we are not satisfied yet. Our argument will become clearer and more convincing if we can show that the contradictions inherent in the Hegelian account of human activity carry over to Hegel’s specific analyses of the forms of practical consciousness. The case of “desire” (*Begierde*) is a very good example here. For it is here that Hegel makes claims that are clearly contrary to our inter-

pretation of his views: in desire, Hegel asserts, the agent acts as a being of pure impulse and appetite; here “. . . appetite has as yet no further determination than that of impulse — so far as this is not determined by thought . . .”<sup>73</sup> Such impulsive, appetitive drive seems to be something that human beings share with all *living* creatures: “The non-living has no appetite [. . .] the living being and mind or spirit necessarily possess impulse . . .”<sup>74</sup> And it is not only those explicit statements concerning the “natural” status of *Begierde* that are meant to convey to the reader the impression that mere impulse and appetite are all there is to that form of experience. Hegel makes the same point in his description of desire’s goals and purposes and of its frustrations as well. The goal of desire is to appropriate, to assimilate the environment through the acts of immediate *consumption*. But once the organism stills its hunger or thirst, they will soon reappear again in a monotonous, repetitive way. For to say that the object is merely *consumed* means that the organism’s satisfaction is but temporary and vanishing. There are only two possibilities open: either the object is consumed and thus disappears altogether or (before consumption) it confronts the appetite as alien and independent of the organism. And this is the cause of desire’s failure to satisfy the expectations of the agent. For a human organism is not just a bundle of needs; it has also a need to have those needs satisfied *permanently*, to have them secured from the vulnerability and lack of permanence of immediate consumption. But appetite itself — unaided by labor — fails to achieve that goal. The act of consumption offers a momentary satisfaction and then the reappearing need has to be stilled again. An organism is thus caught up in the spiral of the “spurious infinity” of desire; and this is so because a merely *living* being is unable to construct the world of industry and civilization, where human mastery over nature frees man from the insecurity and vulnerability of immediate consumption. For *Begierde*, then, the conditions of satisfaction of our needs are not created, but given, not permanent and stable, but vanishing and momentary; and this implies that the satisfaction of these needs represents an ever-ending sequence of total fusions of subject and object in the act of consumption, succeeded immediately by the reappearance of unfulfilled need and appetite.

But this is only one trend of thought — by no means the central one — in Hegel’s analysis of desire. For how could *human* desire mean nothing more than impulse and appetite if it is true that “. . . in our instincts and volitions, as far as they are truly human, thought is an invariable element”?<sup>75</sup> This sentence is in direct contradiction to Hegel’s statement — which we quoted earlier — to the effect that *Begierde* is a mere impulse, “not determined by thought.” For in the present reading *Begierde* is, precisely, a *human* form of desire; and this means that here appetite and impulse *are* subsumed under the symbolism of human thinking. Seen from this angle — which is predominant in the *Phenomenology of Mind* — desire is not a blind appetitive drive, but *an attitude of self-consciousness*, pursuing its own goals and purposes. The self-conscious agent, here, has a certain *conception* of himself which he tries to test

in practice. And Hegel is quite clear in telling us *what* this conception is: it emerges at the end of Understanding, when "consciousness" discovers that reality is not a collection of independent entities, but is spiritual in nature — a reflection of the self. This interpretation of reality — which implies the change from consciousness to self-consciousness — is still a vague "certainty," which the emerging self-consciousness will attempt to transform into a valid "truth." Desire is this movement of self-confirmation of the ego; it has very little to do with a real biological activity of ourselves as organisms belonging to the natural world. Thus the goals of desire are stated and articulated in language permeated by the symbolism of the universal subject: in desire, my *self-consciousness* wants to assimilate and possess the world; I want to destroy the independence of reality in order to show my infinite power over it. ". . . self-consciousness is *Desire*. Convinced of the nothingness of this other [the world — P.H.] it definitely affirms this nothingness to be for itself the truth of this other, negates the independent object and thereby acquires the certainty of its own self, as true certainty, a certainty which it has become aware of in objective form."<sup>76</sup> Desire is thus an attitude of mind, a spiritual drive utilizing our organic needs as a passive vehicle for its own goals. Those needs and appetites *concern* the desiring subject only to the extent to which they fulfill a symbolic function imposed upon them by self-consciousness itself.

From this point of view, both the goals and the failures of (human) desire appear in a totally different light. Its movement is now generated not by immediate pressures of need, but by a conceptual tension in the present self-interpretation of the agent. In effect, self-consciousness is, at the beginning, torn between two conceptions which come to a clash: on the one hand, the immediate certainty of independent reality, on the other hand, a view of that reality as its own reflection. *Begierde* appears now as the drive to remove that conceptual conflict, to demonstrate that reality's claim to independence can be nullified. The feverish aggression against nature is now guided and animated by a new intention: to demolish reality's claim to independence. Jean Hyppolite is absolutely right when he talks here about the "intentionality of desire" in the modern sense of this term.<sup>77</sup> For desire is now structured by the symbolism and the meanings which reflect the whole "drama" of human spirit and which cannot be found in a merely impulsive appetite of an organism. Here desire is imposing itself upon reality not in order to still a particular need, but in order to destroy reality's claim to independence. And the reason why desire fails is now different too. What matters is not so much the mere fact that hunger or thirst are constantly reborn and exposed to perpetual unfulfillment on the level of the impulse-consumption cycle; rather, what is important is that *self-consciousness's* claim to independence from and power over reality cannot be fulfilled in temporary and vanishing victories achieved through immediate consumption.<sup>78</sup>

To sum up: we have just seen that even in his analysis of human appetite and desire Hegel does not succeed (and this, in spite of his clearly stated intentions)

in breaking out of the self-enclosed domain of human autonomy and rationality. Just as in Hegel's analysis of *knowledge* the external reality turned out to be nothing but a conception of the (absolute) knower, so, too in the analysis of desire, human impulse and desire emerge only as vehicles of a spiritual meaning. And this should not be construed as a surprising outcome! For if human consciousness is construed as autonomous to begin with and if we intend to talk about needs and impulses *experienced by consciousness*, we must talk about them as already *subsumed* under a conceptual and symbolic meaning. Any attempt to consider a human agent as influenced by his natural drives and impulses must turn out to yield a contradiction in terms.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kemp Smith transl.; A 558, B 586.

<sup>2</sup> "Every efficient cause must have a *character*, that is, a law of its causality, without which it would not be a cause. On the above supposition, we would, therefore, in a subject belonging to the sensible world have, first, an *empirical character*, whereby its actions, as appearances, stand in thorough-going connection with other appearances in accordance with unvarying laws of nature" (Ibid., (A 533, B 567)). "Man is one of the appearances of the sensible world. [...] Like all other things in nature, he must have an empirical character. This character we come to know through the powers and faculties, which he reveals in his actions." (Ibid., (A 546, B 575)).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. A 554, B 552.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. A 547, B 575.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. A 551, B 579.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. A 556, B 584.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. A 553, B 581.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. A 534, B 562.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. A 541, B 563.

<sup>10</sup> *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. In: Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, translated and edited with an Introduction by Lewis White Beck, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1949, P. 108.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 112.

<sup>12</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. A 358-A 360.

<sup>13</sup> *Hegel's Science of Logic*, Miller transl., p. 47.

<sup>14</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 534-B 562.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> "... even the entire history of his existence as a sensuous being, is seen in the consciousness of his intelligible existence as only a consequence [...] of his causality as a noumenon." "For this action and everything in the past which determined it belong to a single phenomenon of his character, which he creates . . ." *Critique of Practical Reason* (Beck edition), p. 203.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> "In the question of freedom which lies at the foundation of all moral laws and accountability to them, it is really not at all a question of whether the causality determined by a natural law is necessary through determining grounds lying within or without the subject, or whether, if they lie within him, they are in instinct or in grounds of determination thought by reason. If these determining conceptions themselves have the ground of their existence in time and more particularly, in the antecedent state and these again in a preceding state, and so on (as these men themselves admit); and if they are without exception internal; and if they do not have mechanical causality but a psychological causality through conceptions instead of through bodily movements: they are nonetheless determining grounds of the causality of a being so far as its existence is determinable in time. As such, this being is under necessitating conditions of past time which are no longer in his power when he acts. Thus these conceptions do indeed imply psychological freedom (if one wishes to use this word for a merely internal concatenation of ideas of the mind), but nonetheless they also imply natural necessity, leaving no room for transcendental freedom which must be thought of as independence from everything empirical and hence from nature generally, whether regarded as an object of the inner sense merely in time or also as an object of the outer sense in both space and time." *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 202.

<sup>21</sup> *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 112.

<sup>22</sup> *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, p. 19 (The Open Court Publishing Co., La Salle, Ill. 1960).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 20. As Professor Beck puts it "This propensity to take some other maxim than the moral law as the governing principle of action can no more be explained than the opposing disposition to take the moral law. Both are as predispositions to, not as causally determinative of, free acts which can in no way be explained." Lewis White Beck, *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1960, p. 204.

<sup>25</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie Transl., pp. 173-5.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>31</sup> *Phenomenology*, pp. 182-188. See, too, *Science of Logic*, *The Logic of Essence*, Section Two, Chapt. 3, B *The Relation of Force and its Expression*. A good commentary on Hegel's treatment of "force" can be found in: Eugène Fleischmann, *La science universelle ou la logique de Hegel*, Librairie Plon, Paris 1968, pp. 189-193.

<sup>32</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 634. Presumably, this is the passage in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that Hegel had in mind: "These rules, [of practical reason — P.H.] however, contribute nothing to the theoretical use of the understanding in bringing the manifold of (sensuous) intuitions under one consciousness a priori, but only to the a priori subjection of the manifold of desires to the unity of consciousness of a practical reason commending in the moral law, i.e., of pure will" (*Critique of Practical Reason*, Beck translation, p. 174.). What Kant is implying here is this: even though we may not be able to refrain from desiring things which are not good, we can at least choose to gratify only those of our desires the fulfillment of which would not be incompatible with our duty. (cf., here, L.W. Beck, *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 138).

<sup>33</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 634.

<sup>34</sup> G.W.F. Hegel — *The Philosophy of History*, Dover Publications, 1956, p. 23.

<sup>35</sup> "... in our instincts and volitions, as far as they are truly human, thought is an invariable element," *Ibid.*, p. 8. "When the will's potentialities have become fully explicit, then it has for its object the will itself as such, and so the will in its sheer universality — a universality which is what it is simply because it has absorbed in itself the immediacy of instinctive desire and the particularity which is produced by reflection and with which such desire *eo ipso* becomes imbued." (*Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Knox Transl. pp. 29-30).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17. It is clear from the context that Hegel is talking about *human* freedom: "... man as man is free [...] it is the freedom of spirit which constitutes its essence" (*Ibid.*, p. 18). This freedom is *realized* when the conditions of human life are adequate to the requirements of our (rational) self-consciousness, i.e., when self-consciousness can recognize itself in those conditions: "Spirit is *self-contained existence* (Bei-sich-selbst-sein). Now this is freedom, exactly. For if I am dependent my being is referred to something else which I am not; I cannot exist independently of something external. I am free, on the contrary, when my existence depends upon myself. This self-contained existence of spirit is none other than self-consciousness — consciousness of one's own being." (*Ibid.*, p. 17)

<sup>37</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Knox transl., *Introduction*, p. 21.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 281. Hegel makes this point over and over again: "... reason is driven on to raise its formal certainty into actual truth, and give concrete filling to the empty «mine»" (*Ibid.*, p. 280); reason "... seeks its «other» while knowing that it there possesses nothing else but itself ..." (*Ibid.*, p. 281)

<sup>40</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind (Part Three of the Encyclopedia)*, Miller transl., Oxford, 1971, p. 185.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>45</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, p. 226. (Addition to Paragraph 4).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>48</sup> Eugène Fleischmann, *La philosophie politique de Hegel*, Librairie Plon, Paris, 1964, p. 31.

<sup>49</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, p. 23.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 255-256.

<sup>52</sup> Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp. 80-82.

<sup>53</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 350.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349.



<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 350.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 349.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 332.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> "What, however, makes such a hypothesis improbable is this: feeling in general is something indeterminate, and that feeling in the head as the centre might well be the general feeling that accompanies all suffering; so that mixed up with the thief's, murderer's, poet's tickling or pain in the head there would be other feelings too, and they would permit of being distinguished from one another, or from those we may call merely bodily feelings, as little as an illness can be determined from the symptom of headache, if we restrict its meaning merely to the bodily element." Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 364.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 364-365.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 363.

<sup>67</sup> cf. above, pp. 64-65.

<sup>68</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 333.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 334.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>71</sup> This "freedom" of the agent — i.e., the fact that what man is cannot be separated from his self-interpretations worked out within a cultural context which he has incorporated — is also the main reason why Hegel rejects the attempts to explain human conduct in terms of what we would call today "brain states": "For it is in any case not the brain in the sense of a physical part which takes its stand on one side, but brain in the sense of the existential form of self-conscious individuality. This individuality, qua abiding character and self-moving conscious activity, exists for itself and within itself. Opposed to this existence within itself and on its own account stand its reality and its existence for another. Its own peculiar existence is the essential nature, and is subject, having a being in the brain; *this being is subsumed under it, and gets its value merely through its indwelling significance.*" *Phenomenology*, p. 358. (my italics — P.H.) This argument, roughly speaking, comes down to the following point: since the notion of the internalized cultural context is crucial to understanding actions of particular individuals, we would have to find some ways of describing that context in terms of physical stimuli received by the agent in the past and in the present. But it is highly dubious that the language of physical stimuli could be sufficient for describing the "input" of a cultural context. This, I believe, is what Hegel means when he says that the brain of a normal human agent is "subsumed under it [self-conscious individuality] and gets its value merely through its indwelling significance."

<sup>72</sup> Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 88.

<sup>73</sup> *Encyclopædia III*, p. 167.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> *The Philosophy of History*, p. 8.

<sup>76</sup> *Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 225.

<sup>77</sup> Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et Structure de la Phénoménologie de L'Esprit*, Vol. I, p. 152.

<sup>78</sup> "Desire has reserved to itself the pure negative of the object and thereby unalloyed feeling of self. This satisfaction, however, just for that reason is itself only a state of evanescence, for it lacks objectivity and subsistence." (*Phenomenology*, p. 238).

## CHAPTER IV

# PASSIVITY AND ACTIVITY IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF KARL MARX

It is a matter of the "physical organization" of man<sup>1</sup> that the conditions of his life are not *given* but must be *produced* by him. Whatever may be the *causes* of this basic characteristic of human organisms, it is, in any case, an objective feature of the human life-process. To man — and to man alone — life does not appear as if following a ready-made, established form or blueprint. Human life is always a task, a challenge, a problem to be solved. *What* man is will be determined by how he takes up and copes with that task; how, that is, he resolves the problem of creating the conditions of his existence. Thus the "mode of life"<sup>2</sup> of man appears in what and how he produces.

This "freedom" of man<sup>3</sup> is another word for the *universality* of human organisms. In effect, man cannot rely on instinct to guide him safely in an established ecological niche. He is open to the *world*; his lack of a secure, well-defined "home" in nature is at once compensated by his ability to use the *whole* nature as his proper environment. "The universality of man appears in practice in the universality which makes the whole of nature into his inorganic body: 1) as a direct means of life, and equally 2) as the material object and instrument of his life-activity."<sup>4</sup> This means, first of all, that *human* modes of production and consumption are not bound up with fixed and definite conditions. And this means, too, that the "universality" of man is not superimposed upon his organic, natural side, but has its roots in the very "physical organization" of human species.

To say that man creates the conditions of his own existence means that production and reproduction of life are dependent, in the case of man, upon the "practical construction of an *objective world*."<sup>5</sup> The objective world is what mediates between a human need and its fulfillment; it is only by interposing the "artificial" environment of tools, machines, etc., between himself and nature that man can cope with the pressures of his natural needs and interests. For ". . . situations in which it is possible to seize hold of the things available without any instruments whatever (i.e., products of labor destined for production), without alteration of form [. . .] are themselves transitional and in no case to be regarded as normal; nor as normal original situations."<sup>6</sup>

This loss of immediacy — the appearance of an objective world interposed between a human need and its fulfillment — is not only a deprivation, but a

source of power as well. The needs of an animal can only be fulfilled under strictly defined ecological conditions. Man, thanks to his ability to create the objective world of tools and technology, can make himself less and less dependent upon changes in natural conditions. The loss of immediacy is thus compensated by the permanence and reliability of the objective world.

In order to sustain that objective world man must produce *more* than is needed for his immediate consumption. The development and expansion of that capacity will result in the inequality between the value of human "labor-power" and the total value of objects produced by the use of that labor-power. What is important to keep in mind is that "the property [. . .] which labor-power in action, living labor, possesses of preserving value, at the same time that it adds to it, is a gift of Nature . . ."<sup>7</sup> And to the extent that civilization means the increasing role of the objective world as mediator between need and its fulfillment, the appearance of the surplus-value is a necessary precondition of all civilized life.

The (specifically human) mode of activity through which man transforms nature into an objective world is nothing else than *labor*. Labor, of course, can be studied in many ways. Thus, for example, Marx will study that form of labor which results in the production of *commodities*, and he will separate it sharply from all different modes of production. Similarly, we can study labor from the point of view of "forms of intercourse," i.e., social relations that men enter into in the process of mastering nature through their productive activities. Or, again, we may want to study the influences of the ideological "superstructure" upon the development of productive forces. In all these inquiries labor will appear as a social and historical phenomenon, conditioning other such phenomena and being in turn conditioned by them.

But labor is also ". . . a necessary condition, independent of the forms of society, for the existence of the human race; it is an eternal, nature-imposed necessity, without which there can be no material exchanges between man and Nature, and therefore no life."<sup>8</sup> And although this "production in general"<sup>9</sup> is not a metaphysical universal but, rather, a common pattern running through different forms and stages of production, it is not a totally vacuous concept either, since those specific and determinate modes of production must have a ". . . unity — which arises already from the identity of the subject, humanity, and of the object, nature . . ."<sup>10</sup> This means, in any case, that the process of labor is always and everywhere the interaction between a certain type of organism and its natural environment; as such, labor does have some permanent, unchanging features.

When we say that labor can thus be treated as "the production process in general, such as is common to all social conditions, that is, without historic character, *human* if you like,"<sup>11</sup> we are not implying here, of course, that labor is not a *social process*. Quite the contrary. It is precisely because man is a being of need who must create the conditions of his own existence — an activity, which cannot be carried on by an isolated individual — that he is objectively a

social being. The division of labor may go hand in hand with alienation, but it is, nevertheless “. . . the economic expression of the *social character of labor* . . .”<sup>12</sup>

The conception of man as an organism who creates the conditions of his life through the process of labor forms the basis of several definitions of man scattered throughout Marx's works. Two examples would be of particular importance to our concerns in the present study:

1. Man can be defined by the fact that *his* productive activity is guided by creative imagination, by conception and knowledge. This is the crux of Marx's famous distinction between the “worst architect” and the “best of bees”: “. . . what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality.”<sup>13</sup> Not only — contrary to some criticisms<sup>14</sup> — is there no “contradiction” between this definition and the view advanced so often in *German Ideology* (“Men [. . .] begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence . . .”), but these two descriptions of man refer to two aspects of the human form of life which are truly inseparable. For that “structure in imagination” is here not a vague mental image, but a *plan*, a conception of the house, which embodies the whole *knowledge* of the architect. It is in this sense that Marx talks about the products of human labor as “the power of knowledge, objectified.”<sup>15</sup> And these plans, conceptions and ideas — briefly, our conscious ways of going beyond the boundaries of the given and the familiar — are indispensable to an organism coping with the task of *creating* the conditions of its life.

2. Man can also be defined as a *historical* being. And — again — the historical dimension is not superimposed upon man's physical organization but grows directly out of it. “History itself is a *real* part of *natural history*, of the development of nature into man.”<sup>16</sup> Let us develop this point a bit. The attribution to man of the historical dimension is implied by Marx's general view that human life does not flow in a ready-made channel, but is shaped by man's own attempts to cope with the task of creating the conditions of his existence. For in the process of taking up and responding to that challenge through the process of production, *man himself* undergoes a change and that change *is* the beginning of the properly historical existence. In constructing the objective world man begins to modify and change his original needs. For example, hunger which is repeatedly satisfied under certain man-made conditions ceases to be *the same hunger* that it was before;<sup>17</sup> its identity is profoundly affected by the way in which it is dealt with. Moreover, the process of *producing* the environment within which man satisfies his needs is itself the origin of new needs — we do not just need a place to “sit on,” but a piece of furniture. And this production of new needs is the first historical act.<sup>18</sup> Is this statement incompatible with the claim Marx made just a few paragraphs earlier, when he asserted that the first historical act is simply the act of producing the means to satisfy our basic needs? Clearly, there is no contradiction here. For — as we just

saw — the creation of the means to satisfy our basic needs is tantamount to the appearance of *new* needs.

Historical time is time where the past, the traditions, etc., are of utmost relevance to the present and the future. And this relevance of the past is itself an aspect of the productive activity of men. For production does not operate in a vacuum; it emerges against the background of the available productive forces — technology, capital, etc., — handed down by earlier generations. Part of that past historical background is made up of the institutions and values which grew out of human *praxis*.

Everything we said up to now can be summed up in these two statements: "Man is directly a *natural being*."<sup>19</sup> "but [ . . . ] he is a *human natural being*."<sup>20</sup> This means that the specifically "human" functions of our thought and action are not alien elements imposed from outside upon the merely "natural" side of our existence. It is man as a *natural* being who constructs the objective world and opens up the horizon of historical time. For we find it impossible to describe adequately human organisms without taking into account their ability to construct the objective world or to live in the historical dimension. Conversely, it is impossible to separate history and objectivity from their roots in the physical organization of the human species.

We have explored earlier the antinomies of the idealistic interpretation of knowledge. We can now begin to see how these antinomies could lose their significance. In effect, once we cease to consider human thinking as a disinterested activity of pure Ego and — following Marx — begin to interpret it as part and parcel of man's attempt to create the conditions of his life we can gain a new perspective on the relation between "activity" and "passivity" in human knowledge. This, indeed, is the *philosophical* outcome of Marx's conception of *praxis*. And these philosophical consequences of Marx's theory I now propose to explore in more detail.

To begin with, then — and to develop the point which we already made earlier — it is perfectly understandable why the cognition of a *human* organism must involve the use of concepts, rules, general laws, etc. For man does not live in an established, natural environment, all ready-made and given to him. His is the "universal" environment of the objective world. Hence his cognition cannot rely on instinct and association; it must be suited for the task of relating, not to a limited fraction of nature, but to nature as a whole. Man must be able to explore and to face radically different and changing conditions, and this could not be achieved by the workings of instinct and association alone. The "universality" of human cognition is thus necessary for the practical universality of human *life*.<sup>21</sup>

In a sense, then, it is still true — as it was for Marx's idealist predecessors — that a human knower must be able to relate to things through the medium of conceptual knowledge. The practical necessity of transforming nature into conditions of human life makes it imperative for man to "subsume" contents of his experience under the conceptual frameworks of common sense

and science. Without developing this ability, man would not be in a position to consider things under different points of view and independently of a narrow, limited place of their original location in nature. Let us be more specific. The construction of the objective world in the process of labor is guided by concepts and ideas. Thus the product of labor embodies a form, a pattern; it represents a materialization of a conception. And it is only thanks to the possession of a form that an object can have a function in our environment, that it can meet a definite need not just as a matter of temporary and accidental coincidence, but through the very "necessity" that guided our conscious production of it. The parts of an axe, for instance, are arranged according to a pattern which makes that tool a reliable means of satisfying the need to build shelter. And thus the object emerges as endowed with a *meaning*. The meaning indicates the function of an object in the context of other such objects as referred to the system of human needs and concerns. ". . . men begin effectively by appropriating certain things in the external world as means of satisfying their own needs, etc.; later they came also to give them a verbal designation according to the function they seem to fulfill in their practical experience, that is, as means of satisfying these needs . . ." <sup>22</sup> Thus the "universality" of human cognition — the necessity to subsume our experiences under concepts, to grasp a meaning in them, to "begreifen" them — is not justified through a transcendental argument, but emerges, in Marx's philosophical anthropology, as a natural outcome of man's situation in the world. Even the objects which are not simply artifacts must be — if they are to count as relevant to human concerns — interpreted in terms of human meanings and functions. It is in this sense that "Plants, animals, minerals, air, light, etc., constitute, from the theoretical aspect, a *part of human consciousness* . . ." [my italics—P.H.] <sup>23</sup> At this point, then, Marx concurs with Kant and Hegel: an object which would be *in principle* inaccessible to our descriptions and conceptions would be indeed of "no concern to us"; such an object would *matter* to us neither in practice nor in theory. Thus our awareness of nature is always shaped and articulated in our conceptual scheme, from which it follows at once that nature as we know it is necessarily "humanized." <sup>24</sup>

But this — specifically human — *spontaneity* of man is inseparable from his *receptivity*. The *same* knower who constructs in practice and in theory — "humanized" nature is also a passive, sentient being; or rather he is a knower insofar as and (only) to the extent that he is a natural, receptive creature. In other words, we are not faced here with a mysterious juxtaposition of two different functions of human existence. Conceptual cognition stems from and is in service of the "physical organization" of man. For the construction of the objective world is a function of man as *natural* being; and since the process of that construction — in human labor — brings about the appearance of its own cognitive tools of thinking and conceiving, those latter functions are parts of human mode of *life*.

This also means that it becomes not only possible but indeed necessary to

reinterpret the whole relation of man to nature *outside* him. For if human knowledge is part and parcel of man's attempt to deal with his needs and if needs are dependent, for their satisfaction, upon real material objects around us, then a human knower is always already anchored in nature. He is, to use Marx's favorite expression, in constant "metabolism" with nature. And this is why man, *even when considered as subject of thinking and conceiving*, has a felt, immediate experience of nature as — to use another of Marx's favorite expressions — his own "inorganic body."<sup>25</sup>

When Marx writes, in the manuscript on *Private Property and Communism*, that the question about the "nature in itself" is a "product of abstraction"; when he adds that he cannot answer that question because "it is a perverted one" he is not contradicting his own description of nature as an independent, material environment. True, to ask the question about nature as it is "in itself" means to expect an answer, which could only be provided in terms of *our* theories and conceptual frameworks — an answer, that is, which would present nature as already shaped and interpreted by the specifically human mode of cognition. But — on the other hand — that specifically human mode of cognition (and, hence, the "humanized" nature which is its product) is itself inseparable from man's embodiment and receptivity; hence the subject who asks the questions about the meaning of nature is himself part of the latter. Thus man not only shapes nature by his conceptual frameworks, but experiences its full independence as well.

It is through his *senses* that a human knower relates to nature as fully independent of his own knowledge of it; "The fact that man is an *embodied*, living, real, sentient, objective being with natural powers, means that he has *real, sensuous objects* as the objects of his being, or that he can only express his being in real, sensuous objects. *To be* objective, natural, sentient and at the same time to have object, nature and sense outside oneself, or to be oneself object, nature and sense for a third person, is the same thing."<sup>26</sup> Sensory cognition, then, is unique in that its very claim is to relate to an independent "other" and to be profoundly *affected* by it. Thinking can at least *appear* to be divorced from that relationship to an independent material environment. But sensing is part and parcel of man's metabolism with nature: my skin is exposed to the cold of the winter, I feel the heat of the desert and breathe the thick fog of an autumn day. I am *dependent* on nature even while subjecting it to my conceptual schemes and interpretations.

The role that Marx wants to ascribe to senses requires at once an important change in our customary view of sensibility. For if senses are to be able to experience the presence of independent *objects*, then they cannot be described as conductors of unstructured sense-data: in exploring the world with my eyes, I must be able to identify and to recognize a table, a lamp, a book, etc. But how could it be that my sight gives me not just a constellation of visual sensations — which would then have to be combined by the (superimposed) concepts and rules — but a genuine sense of an *object*?

It is through their participation in the process of *labor* that senses have acquired the capacity to relate to objects. The history of human labor, Marx will say, is the history of the *formation* of senses. His solution is here typical of any attempt to go beyond the untenable opposition of two concepts which have been traditionally defined as logically incompatible. What Marx wants to claim is that the predicates traditionally ascribed to thinking can very well be conceived as applicable to sensing, provided that both sensing and thinking be construed as dialectical “moments” of a third thing. This common ground of sensing and thinking can be found, not in some mysterious faculty of “transcendental imagination,” but in human *labor*. It is precisely because our senses have been formed through their participation in the process of labor, that they are not vehicles of unstructured sensations, but genuine “powers” capable of detecting forms embodied in the material. It is *senses themselves* which are now able to recognize and to identify objects: the ax, the hammer, that piece of wood are *seen* (not just thought of) *as* an ax, a hammer and a log. “The eye has become a *human* eye when its *object* has become a *human* object, social object, created by man and destined for him. The senses have, therefore become directly theoreticians in practice.”<sup>27</sup> The form, here, is not superimposed upon sensibility, but appears as an integral moment of sensing itself.

It would perhaps be appropriate to pause for a moment at this juncture and to ponder the following issue. Marx claims that senses are “theoreticians in practice.” In this, he goes beyond not only (modern) empiricism and rationalism, but beyond Aristotle as well. For if senses are such *theoreticians* in practice then the form present in an act of sensing cannot simply be a *particular* form. Sensing must be able to discover forms which are truly universal. But then — how would it differ from thinking itself? If the Aristotelian “*nous*” is not needed to disentangle the universal from its embodiments in sensory contents, since senses are themselves “theoreticians” — then isn’t it true that the difference between sensing and thinking is completely abolished?

But to say that senses are “theoreticians in practice” does not imply that the sort of universals *they* are capable of discovering is the same as the universality of sophisticated concepts of scientific or even ordinary thought. To be sure, Marx does not elaborate or even hint at those differences. But there is nothing in his writings to suggest that it would not be possible to talk about the levels and degrees of universality. My eye may very well be able to grasp the general function of “chair” when focusing upon *this* particular object, but such and similar cases of recognizing universals could be based on some sense of a more or less vague “style” or “pattern” running through a family of objects endowed with similar practical functions — still a far cry from considering these objects *via* more sophisticated conceptual frameworks.

There is still another line of argument — explicitly suggested by Marx — which has not yet been explored by Marxist scholarship and which, in my judgment, could offer fruitful results when pursued systematically. To do so would lead us beyond the framework of the present study. Nevertheless we



can at least point out the general direction for such an exploration. Speaking about man's relation to the "objective," man-made environment Marx writes: "The objects then confirm and realize his individuality, they are *his own* objects, i.e., man himself becomes an object. *The manner in which these objects* become his own depends upon the *nature of the object* and the nature of the corresponding faculty; for it is precisely the *determinate character* of this relation which constitutes the specific *real* mode of affirmation. The object is not the same for the *eye* as for the *ear*, for the ear as for the eye. The *distinctive character* of each faculty is precisely its *characteristic* essence and thus also the characteristic mode of its objectification, of its *objectively real*, living *being*. It is therefore not only in thought but through *all* senses that man is affirmed in the objective world."<sup>28</sup> Several trends of thought need to be emphasized in this passage. First of all, Marx is taking a stand on the issue that has polarized Locke and Leibniz and has, ever since, separated empiricism from rationalism. Against empiricism, Marx is stressing the *unity* of sensory experiences. Against rationalism he is defending the *diversity* of sensory fields opened up by different senses. The bone of contention between Locke and Leibniz — could a blind man *know* physical objects just as well as we do? — comes to mind immediately as Marx finds both of these positions onesided. Our senses do have a unity as all of them are ways of exploring and getting a grip upon the same objective world: it is the same ax, or cube which I both see and touch. In this sense, the blind man would have a fairly good notion of the object which we see with our eyes; he would understand its function and its place in the network of significant relations established by our practical concerns. But, on the other hand, the perceptual field opened up by each sense is different and unique: the same functions of an ax or of a cube will appear with more and richer implications to the man who can explore them with his eyes too. Second — and this is the aspect of Marx's position which is here of direct concern to us — it is precisely that diversity of senses which makes sensory forms and universals different from concepts. From the vantage point of geometrical definitions formulated by pure intelligence the cube seen and the cube touched are identical since they are constructed according to the same *rule*. Not so — or not entirely so — in case of our sensory experiences. Here, every sensory field has its own specific character, its own organization. The physical object that we touch and see is always already an *object*, a *form* embodied in the material; but that form appears differently to every sense. Thus there *is*, after all, a clear difference between sensory forms and intellectual forms. The step from the former to the latter will abolish the uniqueness of every sensory field. It will level down all different sensory fields by subsuming them under a fixed and invariable rule.

Our purpose up to now has been to outline an interpretation of Marx's philosophical anthropology as a response to idealism's inability to reconcile human passivity and activity. We have attempted to show how the spontaneity of human cognition is bound up with man's essential receptivity due to the fact that human knower is not a disinterested subject but a being of need engaged

in the process of producing the conditions of his existence. We shall now offer more detailed arguments in favor of our position. By focusing our attention on two specific problems — the overcoming of appearance and the structure of labor — we will be able to better appreciate the advantage that Marx's theory offers when confronted with the philosophy of Hegel.

### 1. *Marx and Hegel: the overcoming of appearance*

Absolute knowledge emerges in the final stage of the *Phenomenology*. Thus the seeds of the contradiction that Marx finds in absolute knowledge — that the knower must be construed as related to independent sensible *reality* and yet the ascription of any such relation cannot be reconciled with the stringent requirements of *knowledge* — must have been planted at the very point of departure of the *Phenomenology*. This, I would imagine, is simply another way of saying that false conclusions cannot follow from true premises. And this is why Marx insists that "It is necessary to begin with the *Phenomenology*, because it is there that Hegel's philosophy was born and its secret is to be found."<sup>29</sup> Indeed, one of Marx's purposes in his discussion of the *Phenomenology* in the manuscript titled *Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy* is to discover and to specify those assumptions of the *Phenomenology* which are responsible for the contradictions in Hegel's final conception of knowledge.

What Marx considers to be the basic "error" of the *Phenomenology* is nothing less than the fundamental assumption of that work. Hegel makes that assumption already in the *Introduction* to the *Phenomenology*. In that text Hegel sets out to answer *the* philosophical questions of all ages: whether we can have "the actual knowledge of what truly is." His own way of dealing with that problem — a way which means a radical departure from the critical orientation of modern philosophy — does not rely upon the philosophical criticism of knowledge but begins with a return to the point of view of natural consciousness. The process of *self-examination* of that natural, "naive," consciousness will be retraced in the *Phenomenology of Mind*. Neither the standards for examining the validity of human cognitions nor the need to examine them are borrowed from the technical world of the philosopher. In effect, it is within the natural consciousness itself that the distinction between particular cognitions and a general standard for assessing them appears in the first place. For at least within the *human* consciousness there is always a split between its own cognitive experiences on the one hand and some standard or yardstick by means of which consciousness assesses their value. A human knower always has a conception of the "essential nature" (the "in itself," the "truth"), i.e. of what counts as reality and as true and genuine knowledge of it. In the light of that standard consciousness will sort out and examine its particular experiences. Thus, for example, if we are committed to the standards of sense-certainty, then what counts as true and genuine knowledge of reality will be looked for not in scientific theories or philosophical conceptions, but in pure sensing and

intuiting. The *examination* of that standard or model of knowledge will amount to the assessment and testing of those cognitive experiences which correspond to our model. At each stage this process of examination will result in the discovery of some features of our experience which are necessary for its being counted as a piece of *knowledge* and which are clearly incompatible with the conception of knowledge defined by our initial standard. For example, the examination of sense-certainty will discover it to be not a pure intuition of bare particulars, but a form of knowledge which is already sustained by the use of universal concepts — a discovery, which results immediately in the collapse of the assumed standard of knowledge (as it now turns out, true and genuine knowledge *cannot* be found in pure sensing and intuiting). A new conception, a new standard of reality and of knowledge will emerge.

This emergence of a new conception of reality and knowledge is at the same time a step on the road to overcoming man's alienation. For it appears, now, that what consciousness took to be an independent, objective reality, set over against human cognitions, enjoyed that status only due to consciousness' own interpretation. ". . . consciousness comes to find that what formerly to it was the essence is not what is *per se*, or what was *per se* was only *per se* for consciousness."<sup>30</sup> Briefly, it was simply *our* conception that was projected and hypostasized as a collection of independent entities (be they sensible particulars, or perceptual "things," etc.) To invalidate the claim of those entities to count as "what truly is," to recognize in this claim a product of *our own interpretation* of reality means, therefore, to recover and rediscover the spontaneity, the autonomy of human subjectivity.

According to Marx, that whole movement of the self-formation of man — from the crude sense-certainty to the total recovery of human spontaneity in absolute knowledge — must have been misconstrued by Hegel, for its concluding stage is burdened by a contradiction. The wrong assumption which underlies the very point of departure of the *Phenomenology* — and which results in contradictory, irreconcilable claims of absolute knowledge — is the conception of knowledge as a disinterested activity of pure consciousness. "Estrangement [. . .] is the opposition of *in itself* and *for itself*, of *consciousness* and *self-consciousness*, of *object* and *subject*, i.e., the opposition *in thought itself* [my italics — P.H.] between abstract thought and sensible reality or real sensuous existence."<sup>31</sup> The knower, that is, *interprets* himself as receptive and sensing, but he never really *is* receptive and sensing. Consequently, knowledge cannot be related to independent reality, but only to its own conceptions. This state of affairs is still hidden from natural consciousness, but it becomes revealed through the movement of the phenomenological experience. "The *Phänomenologie* is therefore quite consistent in that it ends by replacing human reality by "absolute knowledge" — knowledge, because this is the only mode of existence of self-consciousness, and because self-consciousness is considered the only mode of existence of man — *absolute* knowledge for the very reason that self-consciousness knows *only itself* and is no longer disturbed by any objective world."<sup>32</sup>

The contradiction in absolute knowledge is thus a carry-over of the (erroneous) way in which the notions of knowledge and objectivity are defined at the very beginning of the *Phenomenology*. And it is only by reversing the relation of the "subject" and the "predicate," only by conceiving knowledge as a function of the "real man" — a human organism engaged in the process of creating conditions of his existence — that we can restore the relation of knowledge to reality. For to the extent that the movement of overcoming of alienation is still — even when it takes the form of a series of conceptual interpretations of reality — a process that takes place within the mode of life of material, natural beings, to that extent then, the interpretation of the objective world as a reflection of man's creative activity (man ". . . sees his own reflection in a world in which he has constructed.")<sup>33</sup> is itself an outgrowth of the life-activity of a subject who is always already in the "metabolic" relation with independent nature.

At the same time, of course, there *is* such a thing as alienation. For the objective, man-made, world *does* confront man as a collection of independent entities. The vocabulary of common sense is permeated by those hidden ontologies of "naïve realism" or "crude materialism" where the products of human labor are construed as leading a life independent of human *praxis*. And since that life of theirs appears to be cut off from the dynamism of *praxis* which sustains it, since commodities, institutions, values, etc., seem to possess and inhabit an independent realm, they are articulated in that reified language of fetishism — which is nothing more than alienation under its most extreme conditions of commodity production — where the elements of our social and natural environment are presented as bundles of context-free properties, as fixed and frozen "things" which can be identified and explained independently of their relation to the creative activity of men.

In a sense, then, alienation *is* a misinterpretation of the true nature of human environment. But how can Marx have it both ways? How can we refer to naïve realism or crude materialism as wrong, one-sided *conceptions* of reality — and yet refuse to accept the conclusion that the change from appearance to reality is simply a substitution of one conception for another, since we would then be in no position to avoid the contradictions of Hegel's absolute knowledge?

There is no secret here. For once we reverse the relation between the "subject" and the "predicate," once we agree to consider thoughts and interpretations as functions of material praxis, then the alienation in thought becomes a reflection of the *real* alienation. It is because the process of production rolls on independently of the will and the control of producers that the products of what is in fact their own labor emerge as independent entities set over against human activity. Consequently, the recovery of human spontaneity cannot just be a matter of thought, of getting the correct *understanding* of reality; it must involve the abolition of alienation as an objective structure of human life-activity.

## 2. *Marx and Hegel: Labor*

For Hegel — not unlike for Marx — labor can be treated, first of all, as an empirical social activity connected with the values and interpretations of a given historical epoch. In the *Phenomenology of Mind*, for example, Hegel devotes a couple of pages to the analysis of the medieval idea of labor.<sup>34</sup> As Hegel interprets it for us, the success and the fruits of labor appeared to the men of the Middle Ages not as results of their own struggles and efforts, but as “gifts” of God. God has given to man both the Earth and the means to master it. Hence man, the *true* agent of the productive process, interprets himself as a mere “consumer”; his victory over nature is really a manifestation of God’s goodness and benevolence. And this view of labor — labor is not a proud assertion of human autonomy, but a humble acceptance of divine gifts — goes hand in hand with other elements of the medieval outlook (its hierarchical view of the universe, its comfortable, secure anthropocentrism, etc.).

*The Philosophy of Right* presents us with a different conception of labor. Here, in the context of his analysis of the modern civil society, Hegel offers an interpretation of labor which reflects the emerging wisdom of political economy. The social and historical framework, within which the process of production takes place, has by now changed beyond recognition. The system of “natural” social divisions, the world of the serfs and the feudal lords has been superseded by bourgeois society, with its industry, its free market, the emerging classes defined by their position in the process of production, etc. It is only in such a world, says Hegel, that the concept of labor as defined by political economy could have emerged.<sup>35</sup>

But Hegel — not less than Marx — leaves room for the treatment of “labor in general.” His task, now, will be to describe the all-pervasive features of labor and to understand its significance for the development and formation of human spirit. Such was the main focus of Hegel’s interest in *Jenenser System*, in the Master-Slave chapter of the *Phenomenology* and, finally, in the *Science of Logic*. Seen from this angle, his analysis of labor bears striking similarities to the conception of Marx. How far these similarities go we shall soon have the opportunity to see.

However, it seems to me that important writers who have dealt with this subject have not been clear enough in emphasizing essential differences between Marx’s and Hegel’s treatments of labor.<sup>36</sup> In effect, for Hegel labor remains still the activity of self-consciousness. For Marx — on the contrary — in the process of labor man “. . . opposes himself to Nature *as one of her own forces* [my italics — P.H.]”<sup>37</sup> And this difference, far from being too general to be considered important, will have profound consequences on a number of specific issues. These consequences we must now discuss in more detail. Let us begin with a short exposition of Hegel’s conception of labor.

Labor, according to Hegel, always involves some subjective goal of the agent — his intention to meet a need, or to fulfill a desire, etc. The expression “subjective” may, of course, convey several meanings, but it is clear enough as

it appears in Hegel's analysis of labor. The aim of the agent is subjective, first, in the sense that it is entertained in his consciousness as the explicit purpose of his action. Second, and more important, the aim is subjective in the sense that it is the product of the agent's own imagination and conception. It is not just that the purpose of the intended action is not yet *realized* — if it were there would be no need for an additional human activity — but its realization could not be brought about by the development of some objective processes and trends that the agent confronts in his environment. Briefly, the aim of the action is not even an objective potentiality of the world. Man, that is, does not simply help to bring about certain future states of affairs, which are already delineated in the trends emerging in the external environment; the goal is here strictly a product of human imagination and thought.

An important consequence follows. Precisely because the aim of human action is characterized, at this stage, as a subjective conception of the agent, the relation between the goal, or *end* of the action and the *means* for bringing about the realization of that end is the sort of relation that Hegel refers to as "external."<sup>38</sup> What does Hegel mean by that expression? It will be sufficient, for our purposes, to note its function in the context of Hegel's analysis of labor: the relation between the end and the means is an external one in the sense that the same end could be achieved by different means and the same means could be used for bringing about different ends. For example, in order to cross a river one can build a bridge or a raft; and one can use the same wood, not for the purpose of crossing a river, but in order to build a house. The relation between the means and the end is here "external" or "indifferent," because of the very definition of the "end" as a merely subjective goal of the agent. In effect, if the end were to be not an idea in the mind of a human agent, but the *natural* result of some real process or trend (for example, the plant growing out of the seed), then it would not be the case that the same end could have been achieved by different means or that the same means could have been used to produce different ends. For we could not even describe and understand an objective process for what it *really* is, without taking into account its natural end: not to mention the plant as the natural outgrowth of the developing seed would be to distort the identity and the function of the seed. But since, in human labor, the end is *not* an objective component of reality, but a conception in the mind of the agent, the means can be described and understood independently of that particular end that they help to bring about, and the end can be identified independently of its reference to the means.

We have considered the relation between the end and the means of labor and we have discovered it to be the relation of externality and indifference. A similar relation holds between the aim of the agent and the *material* in which it will be embodied; indeed, Hegel believes that the externality of this second relation is entailed by the externality of the first: "the means [. . .] is *external* as against the *extreme* of the subjective end, and therefore also to the extreme of the objective end . . ."<sup>39</sup> Hegel's point, in this sentence, is as follows. The

function, the form of the object, is imposed upon the material through the realization of the aim of the agent. Since the aim is a subjective one, the object itself is not endowed with the function by the mere fact of being a bearer of certain physical properties. The function of providing shelter is imposed upon bricks or pieces of wood only because they happen to be arranged — through human labor — in the form of a house; and that form does not grow out of the inner structure of the bricks and of the wood. Given the fact, then, that the relation between the goal and the reality (in the sense of both the tools and the material of action) is thus an external one, the power of human labor was indeed necessary in order to realize, to objectify, the end. To put it differently, since the end intended by the agent cannot possibly come about through the inner development of some natural processes and trends, the agent must *interfere* with the course of nature; he must do *violence to nature*<sup>40</sup> and to impose upon it his own purposes and goals. The question is: how can he do this? For nature, here, is considered as a system governed by the laws which are indifferent to human goals: when left to their own course the wind, the river, etc. may turn out to be causes of disasters not less than potential sources of energy. How, then, could we “tame” nature and make it serve our purposes? It is here that Hegel resorts, invariably,<sup>41</sup> to his famous notion of the “cunning of reason.” Man can impose his will upon nature because thanks to his knowledge of “mechanical and chemical processes” he can play one natural force against another — he will divert the course of a river with a canal, thereby making nature serve his own purposes. In doing this man does not — and cannot — change the system of laws governing nature, but he *can* use them to his own advantage. It is here, in the process of labor, that the synthesis between natural necessity and (human) teleology is born every day under our eyes.

But in order to thus direct nature towards his own ends, man must *submit* to it as well. His action, in order to be effective, cannot overstep the limits determined by the content of the natural laws; he must aim at the goals which are not incompatible with those laws. And this applies to human actions as well: the activities that man engages in in the process of labor must be performed in conformity with the laws of nature. Hence human labor becomes reduced, for the most part, to a repetitive, monotonous process: as human action is here geared to the mastery of mechanism it becomes itself mechanized. The greater the power of human labor, the greater its mechanization and “de-humanization” — such is the meaning of the whole transition from tools to machines as described by Hegel in *Jenenser System*.<sup>42</sup> For the action of a tool is still the action of the *agent* — the hammer is constantly guided by the hand and the brain; its performance is, at every step, the expression of decisions and skills of the laborer. A machine, on the contrary, can run almost automatically; here genuine human activity (involving skill, insight, etc.) is greatly reduced, and this fact has immediately two consequences: first, a tremendous increase of the power of man over nature, as well as the emergence of the conditions which can create a surplus of “free time” for the laboring humanity;

but — second — the growth of the automatic, mechanical features of the labor-process itself.

Even this brief presentation of Hegel's theory allows us to see why Marx, in *Capital*,<sup>43</sup> will choose to support his own analysis of labor with a reference to the *Science of Logic*. And there is even more than that to be said about the similarities between Marx and Hegel. For to Hegel labor appears — as it did to the Greeks — as a precondition of a truly meaningful action and cognition; it is only when man becomes liberated from the struggle with necessity, that he can turn to the free pursuit of the true and the good. For since the agent, in the process of labor, must insert himself in the framework of natural mechanisms in order to achieve his goals, he is himself caught up within the causal nexus; his activity is not, as yet, a *free* one. This is why the discussion of labor in the *Science of Logic* must precede the appearance and the exposition of the (theoretical and practical) Idea. It is only when labor has established our control over external environment that we can turn to the free pursuit of the good and the true. And this is the same trend of thought that comes out so clearly in that celebrated passage in *Capital III*, where Marx tells us that the realm of freedom begins only beyond the process of labor.<sup>44</sup>

These similarities are clear and important. But it is also clear that Marx didn't hesitate to describe the *Phenomenology* as concerned uniquely with the self-formation of man in the process of "mental labor" — and this, in spite of the fact that the *Phenomenology* includes, in the chapter on Master and Slave, an analysis of material labor anticipating almost everything that can be found later on in the *Science of Logic* and in the *Encyclopedia*. Moreover, this coincidence of views between *Phenomenology* and *Logic* is not — or at least ought not to be — a matter of chance. After all, according to Hegel,<sup>45</sup> his *Logic* is nothing but a purely conceptual presentation of the categories and forms which appear in time in the experiences of consciousness described in the *Phenomenology*. Thus labor as analyzed in *Logic* is only the formal structure of the process of labor described in the *Phenomenology*. It is therefore difficult to see why Marx would want to take such a favorable view of Hegel's analysis of labor and yet condemn him for having dealt with "mental labor" alone.

Let us take one more look at Hegel's position. In the process of labor the agent, by interposing tools and machines between himself and nature inserts his action in the causal nexus of natural mechanisms and directs nature towards the ends that he desires. These ends may very well be (and are, for the most part) established by the agent's concern about his needs, interests, etc; the plough that Hegel is talking about in the *Science of Logic* is used in order to produce grain and still human hunger. So far so good. But *who is the agent?* For Marx it is simply a human *organism*, a part of nature which turns against its own "inorganic body" in order to create the conditions of its existence. Not so with Hegel. For him the subject of labor is — unmistakably — self-consciousness, and the activity of labor, even when it aims at the satisfaction of human natural needs, is still the activity of self-consciousness.



In order to substantiate this claim it will be sufficient to point out that in Hegel human *senses* are never genuine subjects of labor. One proof of this can be found in the *Phenomenology*: in the chapter entitled *The True Nature of Self-Certainty* labor is indeed interpreted as the “education” (*Bildung*) and “self-formation” of man, but what is thus formed and developed through labor is simply human *thought*. In the process of labor, Hegel is telling us, the agent develops a *thinking* attitude towards reality; the world matters to him not insofar as it is seen and touched, but insofar as it is thought of. “In this way, we have a new attitude or form of consciousness brought out: a type of consciousness that takes on the form of infinitude, or one whose essence consists in unimpeded movement of consciousness. It is one which *thinks* or is free self-consciousness.”<sup>46</sup> Far from being — as Marx wanted it to be — an activity which shapes and forms the *senses* of the agent, labor is seen as contributing to the development of pure thinking.

Now the reason why Hegel interprets in this way the function of labor is — again — highly significant. The laborer begins to adopt the “thinking” attitude towards the world, for the man-made environment is simply the objectification of thought, of self-consciousness. Where Marx talks about the confirmation of the *senses* in the human world, Hegel describes the latter as the product of an activity of which self-consciousness is the only subject: it is precisely because “. . . thinghood, which received its form and shape through labor, is no other substance than consciousness”<sup>47</sup> that the laborer begins to adopt a thinking attitude towards the world. In other words, since man sees, in the world that he constructed, the reflection and the confirmation of the powers of his *thought*, thought becomes for him the only medium which can grasp reality for what it truly is.

Conversely, when Hegel does talk about those forms of human activity where senses appear as genuine subjects, he does it in the context of his *Anthropology*. This is where he analyzes habits and bodily “aptitudes and skills.”<sup>48</sup> This distinction between habits and skills is, moreover, rather artificial, since for Hegel skills and aptitudes *are* simply bodily expressions of our habits. And to the extent that our body is the vehicle of various habits it can very well be “trained” to achieve an appropriate skillful performance — thus, in Hegel’s example, the arms and fingers of a musician will respond immediately to his aim of playing a familiar melody.

But for Hegel this formation of human senses through the acquisition of skills and aptitudes is profoundly insufficient to allow our senses to function as the subjects of *labor*. Senses can indeed be relied upon in *habitual* performances, but there is a world of difference between our habits and that truly intelligent, knowledge-guided behavior in labor. “The universal, to which the soul [*Seele*, not *Bewusstsein* — P.H.] relates itself in habit, in distinction from the self-determining, concrete universal, which exists only for pure thinking is, however, only the abstract universality produced by reflexion from the repetition of many single instances [. . .] although, on the one hand, habit makes a

man free, yet, on the other hand, it makes him its slave, and though it is not an immediate, first nature dominated by simple sensations but rather a second nature posited by soul, it is all the same a nature, something posited which takes the shape of immediacy, an identity of what is simply given, which is still burdened with the form of mere being, and consequently something not corresponding to free mind, something merely anthropological."<sup>49</sup>

I have taken the liberty to quote this long passage, for at least two important points are made immediately clear by it: 1) habits are formed through "repetition of many single instances," i.e., they can never rise above the level of mechanical associations. It follows, that 2) our bodily skills — be they perceptual or motoric — cannot be manifestations of a truly intelligent behavior, involving the use of thought and conception. Labor — on the contrary — *is* the manifestation of the power of human thought and knowledge. Hegel repeats this over and over again, and this is the reason why the discussion of labor does not — and cannot — take place in the *Anthropology*, but only in the *Phenomenology* and the *Science of Logic*. But in the context of his discussion of labor Hegel does not say a word about the contributions of the human senses. And there is nothing surprising about this. For since labor is guided by thought and by knowledge — not by repetitive "habits" or by instinct — the true agent of the process of labor must be looked for in human self-consciousness.

Marx was thus correct when asserting that Hegel didn't go beyond the concept of the "mental labor." For in Hegel even the process of material production is always — at least insofar as it must rise above the level of mere instinct and habit — an activity of self-consciousness. In Marx, on the contrary, senses are not just passive receptors of stimuli or (at best) vehicles of habitual and instinctive behavior. As Marx put it, senses are "theoreticians in practice": they are capable of recognizing and identifying the forms and the functions of objects under new and different conditions; they can explore the *world* and thereby carry us beyond the boundaries of the given and the familiar. The Hegelian conception of labor might have provided Marx with some insights into the formal structure of "production in general," but it could not have been sufficient for invalidating Marx's general claim that Hegel has reversed the true relation of the "subject" and the "predicate." In effect labor, in Hegel, is construed — just like any other form of human (cognitive or practical) activity — as a performance of the pure Ego. Consequently, it cannot appear as a mediation between human passivity and activity.

Marx's own view is entirely different and it is stated, clearly and explicitly, in *Grundrisse*.<sup>50</sup> Marx starts his analysis with an unmistakably Hegelian turn. The matter (*Stoff*) and the form of physical objects, says Marx, appear at first as "indifferent" towards each other. But, he goes on to add, they become fused into a unity when the objects emerge as conditions or products of human labor. At that point, according to Marx, the indifference of the form and the matter disappears; matter emerges now as transformed and permeated by the forms

bestowed upon it by the labor process. In Hegel, as we remember, the imposition of human purposes upon the recalcitrant material was not sufficient to abolish its indifference towards the form. In Marx, the purposes entertained by the laborer *do* penetrate the very texture of the material. How can we explain that difference? How can the same process — the imposition of human purposes upon the material of labor — be construed so differently by Hegel and by Marx? Why does labor, in Hegel, fail to establish the unity of matter and form and why does Marx view the labor process as overcoming that indifference of the two factors? The answer is not difficult to guess. For Hegel labor is still the activity of self-consciousness; hence a change in human *conception* is sufficient to separate the form from the matter. It is up to the disinterested attitude of self-consciousness to either consider the pieces of wood as a raft or as pieces of *wood*. Not so with Marx. The object's form is not a label which can be glued or unglued deliberately depending upon the free play of the observer's interpretations and intentions. For the material, when fused together with the form in the process of labor, becomes part and parcel of the objective world upon which the agent depends for the sustenance of his *life*-activity. It is only because in Hegel the very labor process is still an activity of self-consciousness that the form and the matter preserve their indifference even when considered as brought together by human labor.

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In his book on Hegel, Charles Taylor has found the right words for describing the ultimate aim of the self-positing activity of the Hegelian *Geist*: the goal of *Geist's* activity can be summed up in that simple proposition "let rational subjectivity be."<sup>51</sup> We have seen more than once that if we start with the Hegelian conceptions of "spirit," "subjectivity," "reason," etc., we are not able to avoid the difficulties inherent in the idealistic vocabulary. Specifically — and this brings us at once to the subject of the present section — we are not able to construe man as *both* a moral agent and evaluator *and* a creature of need. But what would happen if we reversed, with Marx, the relation between the "subject" and the "predicate"? What if we substituted for the Hegelian "spirit" and "rational subjectivity" that "real corporeal man" of Marx? What if the basic aim were to be found not in the proposition "let rational subjectivity be," but in that more mundane goal that *man* ought to be?

In phrasing this way the goal of *human* life-activity we are simply developing the implications of Marx's philosophical anthropology as we have outlined it earlier in this chapter. According to Marx, it is the very "physical organization" of man which implies that human life cannot flow in a ready-made channel,

but is always a task, a problem to be resolved. Now in taking up this task, in responding to that challenge, man is *eo ipso* asserting himself as *value*. For the task of creating the conditions of his life could not be taken up by man unless the assertion and affirmation of human life appeared to him as a goal worthy of pursuing. In this sense, the proposition that man ought to be is the content of the *human* life-activity just as much as the proposition "reason ought to be" was the self-evident goal of all the strivings of the Hegelian *Geist*.

According to traditional wisdom there is an unbridgeable gap separating "descriptive" and "normative" statements. It has been argued, over and over again, that normative judgments cannot be deduced from descriptive judgments alone; that we cannot arrive at a conclusion containing an evaluative word unless such a word was already included in the premises of a moral reasoning. For, it is implied, the mere "description" of the facts does not warrant any evaluation; unless, then, our description was conjoined with some evaluation to begin with, we will not be able to deduce a conclusion including a normative judgment of one type or another.

I shall here leave open the question as to whether the separation of the descriptive from the normative vocabulary does or does not have some justification within certain special areas of human activity. I only want to point out that the separation of description and evaluation is altogether artificial from the point of view of man as Marx sees him: not as a detached, disinterested observer, but as an organism engaged in the activity of creating the conditions of his life. For from the point of view of man as he takes up the task of creating the conditions of his life, that life is not an indifferent "fact," about which some purely "descriptive" statements could be made. To man considered as an engaged and active participant in human life-process, human life does not appear as a fact among other facts — assuming it is possible to grasp "facts" in some value-free cognition — but as already stamped with a value. In order to separate his "evaluative" and his "descriptive" stance towards human life man would have to disengage himself from his own life-activity. But we must deal here with "... individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination . . ."<sup>32</sup> Thus when confronted with trends or actions which contribute to the development, and to use Marx's word, the "self-realization" of man, we cannot ask the questions that G.E. Moore asks ("this is pleasant — but is it good?"; "this is approved by society — but is it good?," etc.) in order to separate natural facts from values. Such questions make no sense anymore, since the participation, the involvement in the process of human life activity, are *evaluative* stances: it is impossible to describe an action *x* as conducive to the affirmation and self-realization of human species and still ask the question "is that action good"? Conversely, every situation which stifles and fetters the development of man is *eo ipso* imbued with negative value. Thus if we refuse, with Marx, to adopt a disinterested, transcendental attitude, if we cease to measure human beliefs in terms of their reference to some "objective standards" cast over and against human life activity, then all descriptions

referring to a certain type of natural and social situation are logically inseparable from (positive or negative) evaluations. It is only in this context that one can understand and justify the presence of so many judgments of value scattered throughout Marx's "scientific" analyses in *Capital*.

Any theory casting human "self-realization" as the supreme value for man is under obligation to spell out just *what* the content of such a self-realization would be. In coping with that task Marx will rely, once again, upon his theory of labor as the self-formative activity of man. The ideal of human self-realization is the term of a *real* pattern emerging in the empirical activities of men as they are engaged in the process of producing their environment. For example, Marx often talks about human ability to produce according to the "laws of beauty," and he considers that ability to be a part of the specifically human mode of production.<sup>33</sup> In effect, since human labor is guided by conception and imagination, the Marxian "architect" from *Capital* is always capable of embodying in the material an original vision of things; he can tear the veil of banality and commonplace which stifles the potential of our sensibility. Needless to say, according to Marx this aesthetic potential of human senses *must* be stifled and repressed under the prevailing conditions of commodity production and of alienation of labor in general.<sup>34</sup> But it is *the same conditions* — the increasing sophistication of the labor-process — which both create the new potential of human senses and needs *and* repress its emerging claims and requirements. Indeed the whole process of labor, such as we know it in its past and present form, has that double, paradoxical function: at the same time that it creates those new and higher qualities of human life it also represses them by creating a mode of human intercourse which prevents their realization. "Certainly, labor obtains its measure from outside, through the aim to be attained and the obstacles to be overcome in attaining it. But [ . . . ] this overcoming of obstacles is in itself a liberating activity [ . . . ] the external aims become stripped of the semblance of merely external natural urgencies, and become posited as aims which the individual himself posits — hence as self-realization, objectification of the subject, hence real freedom, whose action is, precisely, labor."<sup>35</sup> It is in *Grundrisse*, not in *Paris Manuscripts*, that Marx writes these words. His intention couldn't be clearer: labor is not only a response to need and dependency upon external objects, but a truly creative and (as Marx put it) "liberating" process through which man gives a higher form to his life-activity, a form where his senses, needs and tastes become refined and stripped of their crude utilitarian functions.

This view of labor comes out with force and clarity in Marx's analysis of *money*. His position is by no means identical with the standard Romantic complaints about money's power of "inverting" all human qualities and relations. To be sure, Marx too — especially in the *Early Writings* in that short, but justly celebrated manuscript titled *Money* — emphasizes the "inverting" power of money. Money will transform the real into unreal and the unreal into real. Money, says Marx, will compensate a man for his ugliness and stupidity by

allowing him to act as if he was clever and good-looking. Conversely, lack of money will make it impossible to display those very same qualities by a person who is "really" clever and good-looking; now since what a man *is* is measured by his actions, the powers and the dispositions which are not displayed in human intercourse are not "real" dispositions, they become reduced to the status of shadowy fictions. Thus human qualities and dispositions, when subsumed under the power of money, turn into their opposites; and hence the feeling that values and hierarchies established by a commercial society are in some sense "artificial" and "inauthentic," that they conceal rather than reveal the true human qualities.

But if Marx shares this general feeling with the nineteenth century Romantics he is by no means one of them. For money — the universal power against which all human dispositions and qualities are measured — is nothing more than the externalization of human *labor*; and as labor is at the heart of the self-formative activity of man so, too, is money. Only a careless reader could be misled, at this point, by a longing — so evident in the chapter on *Money* — for a return to some genuinely "human" standards of evaluation, to emotions and relationships not yet touched by the inverting power of money. For if money — like labor, of which it is the externalized image — is inverting and repressing human qualities it is also *creating* them to begin with. It is not that there is some "truer" and more genuine human reality — feelings, emotions, dispositions — which has been buried underneath the world of money; rather, those very feelings and dispositions which yearn for liberation from the yoke of money are themselves creatures of the latter.

In order to make this point clear we must first grasp the connection between labor and money. Long before Marx has arrived at his mature positions as expressed in *Capital* his view of that connection has become well crystallized — at least in its main outlines. Even in his early manuscript on *Money* Marx calls money " . . . the alienated and self-alienating species-life of man . . . the alienated *power of humanity*."<sup>6</sup> But it is especially the *Grundrisse* and *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* which offer illuminating insights into Marx's view of the relation between human labor and money.

Marx begins the *Contribution* by introducing the concepts which are familiar to any reader of the *Capital*. We start with the analysis of that simplest economic category called *commodity*. In order to understand the commodity we must introduce the distinction between the use value and the exchange value. This, in turn, leads to the concept of *abstract general labor*; for as the exchange value of commodities reflects the amount of labor socially necessary for their production and as that exchange value is (1) a measurable quantity (2) unaffected by particular uses and qualities, it follows that the kind of labor which is responsible for the creation of exchange values must be uniform and homogeneous too. In order to view labor from such a perspective we need to consider it as resolvable into "simple" labor — that pure expenditure of human

productive energy considered in abstraction from the laborer's skill, training, social status, etc. It is this kind of "abstract" labor which creates the exchange value and is thereby responsible for the "universal alienation of commodities"<sup>57</sup> from their immediate use values. That alienation of commodities — the separation of the exchange value from the use values in which it is embodied — is thus the result of a social relation between individuals which (due to the specific conditions of production) emerges as a relation between things; it is a human relation "hidden behind a material veil,"<sup>58</sup> so that the exchange value is taken as a natural and given property of commodities, not as a sediment of human productive activity. But this alienation of the exchange value is only the first form of alienation discussed by Marx in the *Contribution*. For, by a process which has nothing to do with human conventions and agreements, the whole world of commodities posits, as its universal equivalent, one particular commodity: money. To ascribe that activity of positing money to the world of commodities is entirely appropriate here. In fact, from the moment that the world of commodities emerges as separated from and cast over against human productive activity, it begins to move by its own momentum. Marx will speak about the commodities' "universal action"<sup>59</sup> of projecting a standard against which to measure their exchange values. Thus human labor is first embodied in the exchange value of commodities which then finds *its own* embodiment in that particular commodity called money. This is how money — be it linen, or silver or gold — becomes the "direct reification of universal labor-time."<sup>60</sup> And as money is the embodiment of (abstract) human labor, the qualities and the functions of the latter are reflected — although in a distorted, "reified" form — in the movement of the former. Let us consider one example. The appearance of money allows an unlimited expansion of wealth: due to money, the accumulation of wealth can extend far beyond the immediate need and consumption. For this "growth for growth's sake" makes sense only if wealth can be embodied in a durable, objective equivalent, which is not destined for immediate consumption, i.e., in money. This, of course, was well known to Locke, not to mention Aristotle. But what Marx now adds is that this "going beyond the limit" which we witness in the movement of money is a reflection of the unlimited creative drive of human labor, of its tremendous power of transcending all the boundaries that man encounters in nature, in his own traditions, etc. It is especially in *Grundrisse*<sup>61</sup> that this "Hegelian" aspect of Marx's theory comes to the fore. Labor is described by Marx as pure negativity confronting the objective world of materials, instruments, capital, etc.; labor is the "yeast" that sets this world in motion and makes it ferment and expand. And as this abstract labor — like Hegel's "ungeheure Macht des Negativen" — pushes beyond the boundaries of the given, so too, does its reified counterpart: money. Both of them are but the two faces of one and the same process through which man forms and develops his higher functions and dispositions. Thus money is responsible for the creation of a new — and higher — human potential.

Marx elaborates on this idea in countless passages. "General wealth" (money) creates an industrious, versatile and "universal" individual<sup>62</sup> — a human being who is not confined to a parochial and narrow point of view, but who is constantly exposed and has to adapt to a form of life where every form of activity may bring rewards and is therefore directly relevant to his needs and expectations. Thus, under the rule of money, human individuals are compelled — both as consumers and as producers — to develop and to cultivate *all* of their qualities and powers, thereby becoming "cultured to a high degree."<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, it is the universal rule of money which is responsible for the spread of freedom and equality. Of *equality*, since individuals participating in the process of exchanging goods and services through the medium of money are on equal footing vis-a-vis each other: each of them is simply an "exchanger,"<sup>64</sup> i.e., the amount of abstract labor embodied in his commodity cannot count as more or less valuable than the equal amount of labor embodied in the commodity exchanged by his partner. Of *freedom*, since exchange presupposes voluntary consent of the persons involved in it; none of the "exchangers" takes the other's commodity by force.<sup>65</sup>

It is this civilizing, creative function of money which provides Marx with a new — new with respect to, for example, *Part I* of *German Ideology* — frame of reference for the division of societies. In *Grundrisse*<sup>66</sup> slavery and serfdom are seen as developments of the clan system. All three of them — clan, slavery and serfdom — belong to the general category of *primitive community*: a society built on ties of personal relations and dependencies. The clan community — the first, the naturally arisen form of human association — is described in the language of Hegelian *immediacy*. At this stage, Marx points out,<sup>67</sup> an individual is not yet separated from his natural and social environment; he *finds* himself as a link or a member of the clan, engaged in direct appropriation of the products of the soil. The bonds between man and his inorganic body — nature — as well as those between man and other men are not yet broken. Moreover, these two immediacies — of man's relation to nature and to other men — are strictly interconnected. The land is the property of the community and it is only as a member of such a primitive herd-like community that man relates to the earth as the inorganic extension of his own body. Man's separation — and, as Marx puts it himself, man's "individuation" — begin with exchange;<sup>68</sup> exchange leads to the emergence of a society where personal dependence is replaced by dependence upon *objects*, i.e., upon the exchange values and their expression in money. It is only now that freedom and creativity begin to develop: instead of being "imprisoned"<sup>69</sup> in his fixed and given role as a serf, a vassal, a member of a clan, an individual becomes open to all possibilities and roles. Marx leaves no doubt as to where his preferences lie: ". . . certainly, this objective condition is preferable to the lack of any connection, or to a merely local connection resting on blood ties, or on primeval, natural or master-servant relation."<sup>70</sup> And this "value judgment" is perfectly consistent with what we described earlier as Marx's position: that the



rule of money is conducive to human development at least to the extent to which it creates a more civilized and "cultured" species of man. Any concept of human self-realization will now have to involve the realization of that "higher" human potential (the emergence of which is due, not to some activity of pure consciousness, but to the self-formation of human organisms through the process of labor and exchange).

This similarity to, and difference from, idealism (*similarity*, since Marx is building his own theory around those "old" idealist notions of autonomy: human activity is destined to reach a level where the agents will act not under the pressure of some external factors but will instead freely develop their highest potential; *difference*, since for Marx the ideal of autonomy is not superimposed upon man as a being of need) can best be seen in those writings where Marx confronts the legacy of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. In fact, Marx's objections against Hegel are strikingly similar to the line of criticism pursued by Hegel himself in his refutation of Kant. What Marx is objecting to in Hegel is that the Hegelian ideal of autonomy remains too "formal," since the moral unity of individuals in a political community does not extend to the level of civil society and family. Since, in Hegel, civil society and family — the spheres of production and reproduction of human life — are governed by the principles which do not conform to the high standards of political activity, it follows that man as a participant in human life-process (for *this* is what he is in his functions as a member of civil society and family) turns out to be in the grip of feelings and desires which contradict the requirements of human autonomy. Thus Marx's criticism of Hegel follows the pattern of Hegel's criticism of Kant. And it is from this angle that we can best understand Marx's view of the relation between the ideals of autonomy and freedom, on the one hand, and human interests on the other. Far from denying the binding value of those ideals, Marx will try to rediscover them in the very texture of the human life-process. And this — as we shall see — will open the way for Marx's own account of those ideals' connection with, and influence upon, human interests and needs.

But we are anticipating our conclusions somewhat. Of course it would be beyond the scope of the present study to offer a review of Hegel's conception of civil society and family. Still, some things at least need to be spelled out if we are to understand Marx's point of departure. What Marx focuses upon in his criticism of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is, in a nutshell, this: in Hegel, man as a member of civil society and family does not yet reach the level of rational, free self-activity. In both civil society and family feeling and desire have not yet been — in fact, *cannot* be — subjugated to the power of reason. Thus, in family, individuals are bound up into one unit by an immediate feeling of love; and this, as Hegel states explicitly<sup>71</sup> prevents them from acquiring the status of independent persons — a necessary precondition of autonomy and freedom. Since the very notion of personal independence finds no room within the family, Hegel does not hesitate to base its organization upon the "natural" differences between man and woman — differences which are at once given a

"philosophical" significance. Thus, according to Hegel,<sup>72</sup> one sex is "powerful and more active" while the other is "passive and subjective"; hence the duty of the wife is to stay at home while the husband confronts the external world. Cast against the standard of rational unity of individuals achieved on the level of political community, civil society fares not much better than family. What Marx refers to, in the *Early Writings*, as ". . . the uncritical positivism and uncritical idealism of Hegel's later works — the philosophical dissolution and restoration of the existing empirical world"<sup>73</sup> comes to the fore in Hegel's treatment of civil society even more so than in his treatment of family. Civil society is all ruled by desire and self-interest — the very opposites, in Hegel's own view, of true freedom. To be sure, the step from family to civil society brings about the assertion of human individuality; but in civil society an individual appears as an "egoist" pursuing his own private needs and desires. It is out of the interactions of those self-interested individuals that Hegel evolves the free market economy with its extremes of wealth and poverty, its economic crises, its unemployment and its "rabble." All those phenomena, according to Hegel, are inherent in man's economic activity; the state can only minimize and mitigate their disastrous effects.

If, now, we want to follow Marx in inquiring into the nature of philosophical assumptions which have led Hegel to his views of civil society and family we shall find out that what is at stake here is the famous "reversal of the subject and the predicate." Since we have dwelt upon this issue earlier in this chapter we shall focus only upon what is directly relevant to our present concerns. According to Hegel, the state is the product of *rational will*. It has been argued recently<sup>74</sup> — correctly, it seems to me — that Hegel is here much closer to the "moderns" than to the "ancients," to Hobbes than to Aristotle. This does not mean, of course, that Hegel is committed to the view of state as emerging out of a *contract*. The state cannot be based on a contract, since political obligation is inseparable from the *moral* obligation, i.e., from the imperative to develop one's own freedom and autonomy (which can only be achieved through the participation in a state). And this, of course, cannot be a matter of a bargain and of contractual agreements guided by merely prudential considerations and conditional upon the fulfillment of those considerations. Still, the political obligation is taken up and responded to by the will of rational individuals; it is from those individuals' free consent that the state derives its existence and it cannot be brought about by a natural development. For as the purpose of the state is the realization of freedom, and as the realm of nature is the realm of *unfreedom*, state can only appear as an "artificial" creation of rational wills striving towards the achievement of self-activity. Now if such is the origin and the function of the state, then the state is not concerned with the emancipation of human need and desire: needs' and desires' only function is to provide the foundations for the emancipation of rational will. And it is this view, according to Marx, which must lead to a purely *formal* assertion of human autonomy in the Hegelian state. The ideal of autonomy will cease to be a "formal" one if it

can be traced back to the human *life*-process, i.e., to man's attempt to respond to the challenge of creating the conditions of his existence. For it is only from that perspective that the need to realize oneself can be interpreted not simply as a striving towards the realization of one's *reason*, but as an effort to affirm and develop one's feelings, senses, tastes, etc.

If one were to object, at this point, that any talk about man's self-realization imputes to Marx a certain view of human *essence* (which is, according to some commentators, the position of "young," but not of "mature" Marx) I will only note two things:

1. It is not in his *Paris Manuscripts*, but in the third volume of *Capital* — which deals, among other things, with that very "scientific" law of the falling rate of profit — that Marx tells us that "the true realm of freedom" lies beyond the sphere of material production; in fact, he does not even hesitate to prophesize how the future conscious organization of production will create the basis for the free activity of man. And it is difficult to see how one could employ in this way such words as "freedom," "necessity," etc., without having some notion of what that "true freedom" is all about, why it cannot be realized without conscious organization of labor, etc., etc. In *Grundrisse* for example, Marx tells us that the "free activity" which will some day become the possession of mankind cannot be identified with play, fun or amusement.<sup>75</sup> And he goes on to emphasize that a truly free activity (Marx gives the example of a composer) is inseparable from discipline and effort; it is "the most damned seriousness, the most intense exertion."<sup>76</sup> All of these — quite specific — statements are a clear indication that Marx did have at least some conception of human essence and its (as yet undeveloped) potentialities.

2. Contrary to some commentators, I do not see why Marx's conception of human essence would be in any sense incompatible with such statements as ". . . human essence is not an abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations" (*Theses on Feuerbach*) or ". . . individuals are dealt with only insofar as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relations and class-interests" (*Capital*). In effect, it is precisely because it is in the "essence" of human life-process to *produce* the conditions of its own existence that individual men and social classes can be defined by their position in the process of production and not by some ready-made qualities or attributes.

But there is a more serious difficulty which must be faced before any talk about human essence can become legitimate within the context of Marx's philosophy. And that difficulty is what I shall call — for the lack of a better word — Marx's "nominalism." In effect, to talk about "man as such" amounts, for Marx, to remain on the level of *ideological* discourse. As Marx puts it in *German Ideology*: "What people were, what their relations were, appeared in consciousness as ideas of man *as such*, of his modes of existence or of his immediate conceptual determinations. So, after the ideologists had assumed that ideas and thoughts had dominated history up to now, that the history of

these ideas and thoughts constitutes all history up to now, after they had imagined that real conditions had conformed to man *as such* and his ideal conditions, i.e., to conceptual determinations, after they had made the history of people's consciousness of themselves the basis of their actual history, after all this, nothing was easier than to call the history of consciousness, of ideas, of the holy, of established concepts — the history of "man" and to put it in the place of real history."<sup>77</sup>

In this passage, Marx restates a view to which he was clearly committed from his very earliest work, *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right."*<sup>78</sup> The only human reality we are warranted to posit are the "real individuals" — men as they emerge under determinate conditions of their life-activity. But the (philosophical, ethical, etc.) self-consciousness of those individuals elevates the form of *their* life to the status of an eternal standard against which *all* human endeavors and beliefs are to be measured. Thus the universal *claim* of that standard should not hide the fact that any such standards can only emerge as constructions of individual men.

However, the very same line of thought which leads Marx to reject the idea of "man as such" is also at the root of his general conception of a human individual as a "species being." For it is only because human individuals *are* such species beings, that they can engage in the process of universalizing in thought the particular conditions of their existence. Unless, that is, we are prepared to talk about some sort of human "essence" (man as a species being) we cannot account for man's tendency to construe values and beliefs implied by his particular situation as eternal standards valid forever and for all.

But this point requires some further explanation. In what sense is it necessary to presuppose Marx's conception of man as a species being in order to justify what he says about the "ideologists" in the passage we have just quoted?

The expression "species-being" — taken over, as is well known, from Ludwig Feuerbach — is meant to capture, in both Feuerbach and Marx, a very special feature of human organisms: our ability to consider ourselves as members of human community. We are not bound up with that community through feeling or instinct alone; we can always *interpret* this relation as the relation between the particular and the universal. And this is why a human individual is not immersed in his particular beliefs, propensities and habits, but is always capable of looking at himself from the standpoint of other similar individuals. Thus whatever I am engaged in doing, I can always consider it from the point of view of attitudes which other people might adopt toward me. I am related to myself through relating to others. I can evaluate my beliefs, attitudes and habits from the perspective of others. This is the ability which animals lack<sup>79</sup> and hence Marx concludes<sup>80</sup> that animal societies are radically different from human societies. It is human individuals alone which can interpret and mold their actions according to the ("universal") norms and customs shared by other such individuals. When that ability disappears, an association of humans is not based on consciousness, but on herd-consciousness.<sup>81</sup>

That unique ability of human individuals to relate to themselves through relating to others is dependent — both causally and functionally — upon what Marx calls the “physical organization” of human species. The dependence is clearly a *causal* one: for without highly developed powers of conceiving and imagining (which, as we saw earlier, stem directly from man’s position in nature) man could never be a “species-being”; without such powers a human individual would never be able to transcend the boundaries of his own private “here and now” in order to adopt the point of view of the other. But, second, the dependence at issue is a *functional* one as well. For due to my capacity of putting myself in the place of my interlocutor and sharing *his* point of view, I can be made aware of, and hence react to, stimuli which are not physically present in *my* immediate environment. A human individual’s grip upon the world is thus significantly enlarged through his participation in a social network of symbolic communication.

What we are saying, then, is that the ability of man to “universalize” his conduct and his beliefs — to measure them and to justify them in terms of standards which are valid for *others* — is rooted in that common feature of human individuals (their “essence”) which makes all of them “species beings.” And unless we accept this as a general fact of the human form of life we will not be able to understand Marx’s account of ideology. In effect, if the “ideologists” of a given society project *their own* standards and values as valid for *others* — for all others — the very *need* of such a projection stems from the fact that human individuals are “species beings.” It is only on this assumption — whatever may be the wording one may wish to give it — that Marx’s theory of ideology can receive a firm foundation. Time and again, a fundamental objection has been advanced against that theory: there seemed to be no valid reason why human interests could not assert themselves *directly*, without the ideological framework of values and ideals. But this objection is not sound, since the assertion of needs and interests in the life-activity of *man* is inseparable from human impulse to universalize one’s conduct. This is why, as Marx never tires of repeating, each class must at least *claim* the universality of its goals.

However, it is undoubtedly true that one must proceed with extreme caution when talking about human “essence” in Marx. In effect, the whole point of Marx’s theory is to avoid the *sterile* forms of the opposition between “naturalism” and “humanism.”<sup>82</sup> It is neither correct to say that there is a fixed and stable essence of man, nor that everything is a product of human history. Thus what we have said above about the human agents’ ability and need to universalize their conduct has to be amended and qualified. In this, we must follow Marx’s approach to other similar issues. When Marx says that man is a creature that produces the conditions of its own existence he wants to claim that — paradoxical as this may sound — man’s ability to produce the conditions of his existence is *itself* shaped and formed by human activity. To be sure, the “physical organization” of man provides a stimulus and a point of departure for the self-formative activity of man. But, in that process, man first

develops and forms *his own* powers of creating the conditions of his existence. This "circularity" of human situation is, I think, essential to Marx. And this is the reason why we must also emphasize the role of *exchange* — a result of the active response of man to the stimulus provided by his "physical organization" — as a factor shaping man into a true species-being. For to say that man confronts other men in the process of ("free and equal") exchange implies, among other things, that a human individual must develop the ability and the disposition to always take into account the point of view of the other — his needs, his desires, his judgment, etc. The necessity to exchange, i.e., to sell one's commodity to another, calls for all the art of "salesmanship"; and that art is predicated upon one's ability to "put oneself into the shoes of the other," to evaluate one's performance and beliefs in the light of the requirements and the standards of others. Thus the specifically human sense of the distinction between the private and public, the particular and the universal, emerges and grows ever more powerful in the society of "exchangers." Here, again, we are witnessing the birth of a "new need" and of *its* claim to self-realization. As the process of socialization expands, as man is forced more and more — by the sheer necessity of producing, exchanging and communicating with others — to participate in the life of ever larger communities, his need for acting as a social man grows ever more powerful. Man's need to universalize his conduct has now developed to the point where he needs to act as a universal, i.e., a social man. He cannot realize himself unless his need to take towards himself the attitude of others — to consider other individuals as just as valuable and important as himself — can find a free expression in his life-activity. Marx's refutation of "crude communism" in the manuscript on *Private Property and Communism* makes it abundantly clear that neither the "classless society" nor the end of division of labor, etc., can represent the ultimate ideal of human association; if they are worthy of pursuing, it is only because they are conducive to the establishment of a true community of individuals.

The difficulty we have had to confront when attempting to come to grips with Kant and Hegel was this: it was not possible, within the framework of idealism, to show how passivity and activity, interests and ideals, could both be attributed to the same subject with the same respect. This difficulty disappears when we approach the problem from the perspective provided by the theory of Marx. At no point does Marx separate man as an ("active") moral agent and evaluator from man as a ("passive") creature of need and interest. Evaluation and moral action are seen as specifically human performances evolving out of man's response to the task of creating the conditions of his life. We have retraced the steps of Marx's account of the two ideals that he shares with his predecessors: the ideal of autonomy (freedom) and the ideal of community (universality). There is no unbridgeable gap, in Marx's account, between the view of man as capable of holding fast to such ideals and the view of man as part of nature. It makes no sense anymore to ask how man could be both a creature of need *and* a moral actor and evaluator. We can attribute to "the

same" agent in "the same" respect the influence of *both* moral ideals and natural interests, since the process of responding to the latter is tantamount to the emergence and influence of the former upon the agent.

This conclusion will emerge more clearly from a brief review of what we said up to now. We have attempted to demonstrate that the ideals under discussion — of freedom and of community — are not posited by pure consciousness, but emerge in the process of human life-activity. Let us consider these ideals one more time.

1. Self-activity (freedom). Like Kant and Hegel, Marx is committed to the view that the unhampered development of man's highest potential is the supreme value to man. But Marx does not account for that ideal's binding validity by evolving it out of the pure practical reason's (Kant) or the rational will's (Hegel) search for establishment of their dominion over nature. The ideal of self-activity emerges in and from the process through which man responds to the task of creating the conditions of his life. For that response implies that human life appear as a goal worthy of pursuing; that the affirmation and the development of our form of life are things to be striven towards. And because what appears thus as the supreme value guiding man in his activity is the development and assertion of human *life* — not of Kant's pure practical reason or of Hegel's rational will — the goal of self-activity cannot be divorced from emancipation of human senses, needs and inclinations. Self-activity must be the activity of the "full man," not just of his reason. In other words, because the ideal of self-activity is posited not by pure consciousness but by *man*, it must involve the emancipation of all *human* faculties.

2. Community (universality). That man is a "universal" being is a view shared by Kant, Hegel and Marx alike. This means, among other things, that human agents are capable of guiding their actions by moral *principles*. Men can always confront their beliefs and attitudes with the standards held by *others*; in fact, the very *need* to engage in that process of testing and confrontation indicates a very special feature of human agents. It is that feature, as is well known, which becomes articulated in Kant's ethical system as man's ability to act as a rational agent guided by the principle "act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only." And it is the same principle which — filled with the content of specific duties made independent of individuals' own judgment — will be subscribed to by individuals who grant each other the Hegelian "recognition."

Far from denying the binding value of these ideals, Marx is trying to give them firm roots in the "species-being" character of human organisms. All three formulations of Kant's categorical imperative will remain applicable and valid when, instead of talking about man in terms of pure reason and will we shall consider him as a species-being.

The *first* formulation of categorical imperative is as follows: "act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." The "universality" that Kant has in mind is of two

kinds. First of all, a maxim which is to count as a genuine moral rule cannot turn out to be self-defeating when applied in all circumstances by all rational agents; thus, in Kant's famous example, to give a promise without having the intention of keeping it could not be reconciled (when applied as a universal rule of conduct) with the desire to preserve the very practice of promising. It is impossible to will the promises and to propose that they may be given deceitfully: under such circumstances nobody would take promising seriously. But since the condition of practical self-consistency can be met by just about any maxim (we cannot be accused of inconsistency if we are prepared to give up our desire to preserve promises as a valid social practice) Kant is led to rely upon still another, more restricted, sense of universality: universal acceptability. In his other by now famous example, Kant points out that it cannot be the goal of rational agents not to develop their talents, but to devote their time to "idleness and amusement." A rule to that effect could not be acceptable to rational agents. What is implied by both these senses of universality is that *my* attitudes must be tested and examined from the point of view of *others*. I must make sure, that is, that my own private preferences could be applied by, and acceptable to, all other rational agents; and this is another way of saying that I must consider those preferences from the point of view of others. It is *this* feature of human agents which Marx evolves out of their "species being" character. And this character is in no way superimposed upon man as a being of need. Man is a species being because *his* way of dealing with his needs passes through the channels of conception and imagination and because it is due to these faculties that a human individual can abandon his own private "here and now" and consider his personal preferences from the point of view of others.

Kant's *second* formulation of the categorical imperative ("act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only") is based on his conception of a person as having an "unconditional" worth. Whatever does have worth — whatever is valuable or precious to us — has it only, Kant is arguing, through its reference to human needs and desires. Since we thus measure the worth of anything in terms of its reference to needs and desires of persons, it must be the case that persons have unconditional worth, that they are "ends in themselves." The connection between the first and the second formulation of the categorical imperative becomes clear now. Since persons are sources of value and hence possess unconditional worth, any individual who would not respect the independence of persons would not be following a rule acceptable to truly rational agents. For no such *rational* agent could freely consent to become a subject of a conceptual confusion (treating something that has unconditional worth as something that has only conditional worth). A man who is willing to forgo his dignity and to accept the position of a slave — i.e., to agree that his worth be measured in terms of desires and needs of his master — is not acting as a rational agent, since he is agreeing to consider persons as if they had conditional worth — a serious "category mistake." Thus even if the rule of slavery



could be applied without practical contradiction, it could not be willed by those agents who are still guided by *reason*.

If Marx — as is so clearly demonstrated by the manuscript on *Private Property and Communism* — subscribes to the rule that men are, and must be treated as, “ends,” never as “means,” his account of that obligation differs from idealism in that, once again, what is at stake here, according to Marx, is not man’s pure rationality, but his status as a species being. In effect, to say that man is capable of taking into account the point of view of others means precisely that man does not consider others as objects of mere desire and need, but that he respects their independence. To be sure, that respect may not be too developed in what Marx calls “primitive community”; but as the process of labor and exchange gets off the ground, as man is compelled by practical necessities to count with the judgments and the preferences of others, his need to consider other persons independently of his own inclinations will grow. The truly social man which has now come to develop has a truly social need — a need expressing a genuine desire to find an outlet for one’s respect of others’ dignity. An association based on need thus leads to a need for an association: “. . . association itself creates a new need — the need for society — and what appeared to be a means has become an end. The most striking results of this practical development are to be seen when French socialist workers meet together. Smoking, eating and drinking are no longer simply means of bringing people together. Society, association, entertainment which also has society as its aim, is sufficient for them; the brotherhood of man is no empty phrase but a reality, and the nobility of man shines forth upon us from their toil-worn bodies.”<sup>83</sup> It is highly significant that Marx is talking here about the shared enjoyment of “smoking, eating and drinking.” This enjoyment has nothing to do with sharing some primitive impulses within a herd. Marx is referring emphatically to a truly social need. On the other hand, this need is radically different from the Kantian respect or the Hegelian recognition. For the social need appears as a need to enjoy the display of others’ *needs, senses and desires*; the enjoyment is derived from treating *that* display as an “end in itself,” i.e., independently of one’s private narrow inclinations and interest. What Marx wants to convey in the passage we have just quoted is the full practical impact of his “reversal of the subject and the predicate”: since human need of, and respect for, association with others stems not from pure reason, but from our common involvement in human *life-activity*, the others are not abstract “persons” or “citizens,” but Marxian “real men,” with all their sensory powers and dispositions.

The *third* formulation of the categorical imperative is perhaps, at its face value, the most difficult to reconcile with Marx’s positions; but I do not think the difficulty is insurmountable. In the third formulation Kant states that “. . . if we think of a will giving universal laws, we find that supreme legislating will cannot possibly depend on any interest, for such a dependent will would itself need still another law which would restrict the interest of its

self-love to the condition that the maxims of this will should be valid as universal law." The difficulty of reconciling this position with what Marx says about the nature of "ideology" is obvious: Kant is saying that if a law is to count as a genuine moral rule than it must be framed without reference to any "special interest" (individual or collective) of the lawmaker. The particular situation of the lawmaker must have no bearing upon the framing of a law; the law must be framed behind a "veil of ignorance," (to use the expression of that contemporary Kantian, John Rawls) separating the legislating individual from his own special station in life. And how can such a requirement be reconciled with Marx's theories of ideology, class-morality, etc.?

Let us note, first of all, that Marx's position has very little to do with Plato's Thrasymachus. Justice is not simply the interest of the strongest, at least not to the extent to which we must accept the existence of a genuine moral impulse in human agents. When Marx says that each class must at least *claim* the universality of its goals he does not mean that such claims are simply cynical devices used to further special class interests. Man as we deal with him now has developed, through the process of self-formative activity of labor, a genuine need to act as a universal, social being. Thus even if a truly "universal" legislation must inevitably fail under the prevailing conditions, the *need* for such a legislation is genuine enough and it will grow ever more powerful.

Moreover — as we have noted earlier — not only there is no contradiction between Marx's theory of ideology and what we just stated to be his view of man's genuine social need, but, in fact, the former view presupposes the latter. This is what comes out clearly and explicitly in at least some of Marx's statements about the nature of ideology. Let us quote one of those statements: "The existing relations of production between individuals must *necessarily* [my italics — P.H.] express themselves also as political and legal relations [. . .] In language such relations can only be expressed as concepts. The fact that these universals and concepts are accepted as mysterious powers is a necessary consequence of the independent existence assumed by the real relations whose expressions they are."<sup>84</sup> In this passage, Marx is making a number of important points. First of all, he is rejecting any form of ethical *psychologism*: legal and political norms emerge as "universals and concepts," they are not reducible to human attitudes and feelings. Evaluative statements which appear in our legal and political vocabulary are statements about *objects* — they are not statements about mental states of the observers. Feelings of approval and disapproval, attraction and aversion have nothing to do with our ascription of values. Thus Marx is squarely on the side of non-psychologism in the theory of value. But this does not mean that he considers values to be independent of human activities and concerns. Just as the exchange value of commodities, although set over against human feelings and desires, is nevertheless a repository of human activity, so, too, are values embedded in our political and legal frameworks. Values, Marx is telling us, can emerge as those "mysterious powers" independent of the producers because they are "expressions" of "real

relations" (of production) which are themselves set over against the desires and the will of human agents. Nevertheless, without human productive activity being set in motion there would be no legal and political values, just as there would be no exchange value. And if political and legal concepts are — as Marx says — "necessary" expressions of production and if production *is* the self-formative activity of man, it will follow at once that the need to universalize one's conduct — i.e., to subsume it under impartial laws and norms — will grow and develop with the expansion of human powers of production.

To sum up: neither in his discussion of human freedom nor in his discussion of community does Marx ever lose sight of his goal of overcoming the opposition between "passivity" and "activity." The ideals of freedom and community are couched in a language which allows us to consider them as attributable to an agent who is also a creature of need and inclination. This, I believe, is what makes Marx's theory of utmost *philosophical* significance.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology, Part One*, International Publishers, New York, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, McGraw-Hill Book Company 1964, p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, Vintage Books, New York 1973, p. 492.

<sup>7</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, International Publishers, New York 1970, p. 206.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 42-43. Marx makes the same point, in almost exactly the same words, in *Capital I*, p. 508 and in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, New York 1970, p. 36. See, too, Lukacs' comments in *Zur Ontologie des Gesellschaftlichen Seins*. Luhterhand 1973, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Grundrisse*, p. 85.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>12</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 181.

<sup>13</sup> *Capital I*, p. 178.

<sup>14</sup> Cf., for example, Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press 1958, p. 99 footnote.

<sup>15</sup> *Grundrisse*, p. 706.

<sup>16</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 127.

<sup>17</sup> *Grundrisse*, p. 92.

<sup>18</sup> *German Ideology*, Part One, p. 49.

<sup>19</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 206.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>22</sup> Karl Marx, *Comments on Adolph Wagner*, in: Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan, Oxford University Press 1977, p. 582.

<sup>23</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 126.

<sup>24</sup> See, for more detail, an article by Leszek Kolakowski, *Karl Marx and the Classical Definition of Truth*, in: *Toward a Marxist Humanism*, New York 1968.

<sup>25</sup> "Hunger is a natural need; it requires, therefore, a nature outside itself, an object outside itself, in order to be satisfied and stilled. Hunger is the objective need of a body for an object which exists outside itself and which is essential for its integration and the expression of its nature." *Early Writings*, p. 207. See, too, *The Holy Family*, in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, International Publishers, New York, p. 120.

<sup>26</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 207.

<sup>27</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 160, cf., too, *Capital I*, p. 372.

<sup>28</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 161.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 199. The question whether Hegel's *Phenomenology* is a genuine justification of his System has been and continues to be a hotly debated issue in Hegel scholarship. I cannot engage here in a discussion of that issue, but I do think that Marx was on the right track in interpreting Hegel. After all, it was Hegel himself, who (in the *Science of Logic*, not in the *Phenomenology*) wrote: "In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* I have exhibited consciousness in its movement onwards from the first immediate opposition of itself and the object to absolute knowing. The path of this movement goes through every form of the relation of consciousness to the object and has the Notion of science for its result. This Notion therefore (apart from the fact that it emerges within logic itself) needs no justification here because it has received it in that work; and it cannot be justified in any other way than by this emergence in consciousness . . ." G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Miller transl., p. 48.

<sup>30</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 142.

<sup>31</sup> Marx, *Early Writings*, p. 201.

<sup>32</sup> *The Holy Family*, p. 192, cf., too, *Early Writings*, p. 209.

<sup>33</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 128.

<sup>34</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 259-261.

<sup>35</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Knox transl., p. 126.

<sup>36</sup> Cf., for example, G. Lukacs, *The Young Hegel*, Livingstone transl., The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., Chapter six; Jacques d'Hondt, *Téléologie et praxis dans la «Logique» de Hegel*, in: *Hegel et la pensée moderne*, ed. Jacques d'Hondt, P.U.F. Paris 1970. However, let us also cite the opinion of Wilhelm R. Beyer (*Der Begriff der Praxis bei Hegel, Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, VI, 1958 p. 755) who emphasizes that Hegel, in spite of all his profound insights into the social character of labor, has failed to take into account the role of labor as a material interchange between man and nature — the Marxian "metabolism."

<sup>37</sup> *Capital I*, p. 177.

<sup>38</sup> *Hegel's Science of Logic*, p. 743.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, (Compare K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 360-361.)

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 746.

<sup>41</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, "Subjektiver Geist," pp. 198-199. In: G.W.F. Hegel (*Sämtliche Werke*, Band XX, Verlag von Felix Meiner, Leipzig 1932.) Cf., too, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, p. 746; *Encyclopedia III*, p. 272.

<sup>42</sup> *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd XIX, Meiner Verl., p. 237.

<sup>43</sup> *Capital I*, p. 179.

<sup>44</sup> *Capital III*, p. 820.

<sup>45</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 808.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Encyclopedia III*, p. 142.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

<sup>50</sup> "There is an indifference on the part of the substance [*Stoff*] towards the form, which develops out of merely objectified labour time, in whose objective existence labour has merely the vanished, external form of its natural substance, existing merely in the external form of the substantial [*das Stoffliche*] (e.g., the form of the table for wood, or the form of the cylinder for iron) [. . .] However, when they are posited as conditions of living labour, they are themselves reanimated. Objectified labour ceases to exist in a dead state as an external, indifferent form on the substance, because it is itself again posited as a moment of living labour; as a relation of living labour to itself in an objective material, as the *objectivity* of living labour (as means and end [*Objekt*] (the *Objective* conditions of living labour). The transformation of the material by living labour, by the reallization of living labour in the material — a transformation which, as purpose, determines labour and is its purposeful activation (a transformation which does not only posit the form as external to the inanimate object, as a mere vanishing image of its material consistency) — thus preserves the material in a definite form, and subjugates the transformation of the material to the purpose of labour. Labour is the living, form-giving fire; it is the transitoriness of things, their temporality, as their formation by living time." *Grundrisse*, pp. 360-361.

<sup>51</sup> Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 93.

<sup>52</sup> *German Ideology*, Part One, p. 46.

<sup>53</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 128.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>55</sup> *Grundrisse*, p. 611.

<sup>56</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 192.

<sup>57</sup> *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, International Publishers 1970, 0. 43.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>61</sup> Cf., in part. *Grundrisse*, pp. 295-299.

<sup>62</sup> *Grundrisse*, p. 274. Cf., too, pp. 325, 409-410.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 409.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 493.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 472-473, 485-486, 490-491.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 496.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>71</sup> *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, par. 158.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 166.

<sup>73</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 201.

<sup>74</sup> Manfred Riedel, *Nature and Freedom in Hegel's "Philosophy of Right,"* in: *Hegel's Political Philosophy, Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Z.A. Pelczynski, Cambridge University Press 1971.

<sup>75</sup> *Grundrisse*, p. 712.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 611.

<sup>77</sup> *German Ideology*, III. *Saint Max*. in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, International Publishers, New York Vol. 5, p. 184.

<sup>78</sup> K. Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 39.

<sup>79</sup> "Where there exists a relationship, it exists for me; the animal does not enter into any relation at all. For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation." *German Ideology*. Part One, p. 51.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 155.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>84</sup> *German Ideology*, quoted in: Karl Marx, *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*, ed. Bottomore and Rubel, McGraw-Hill 1964, p. 78.

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